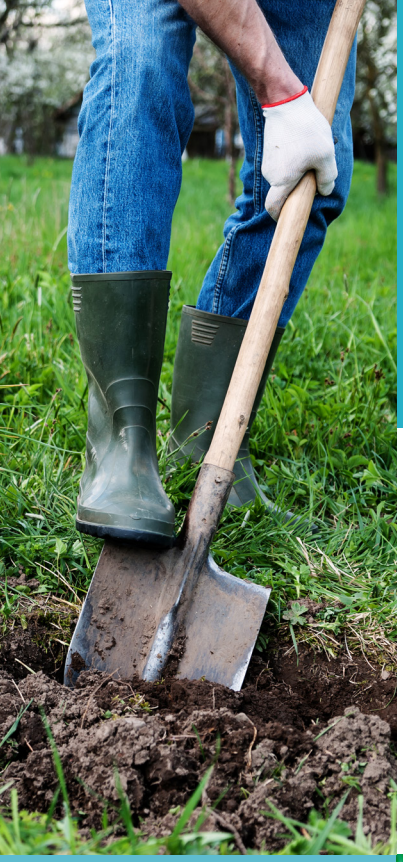
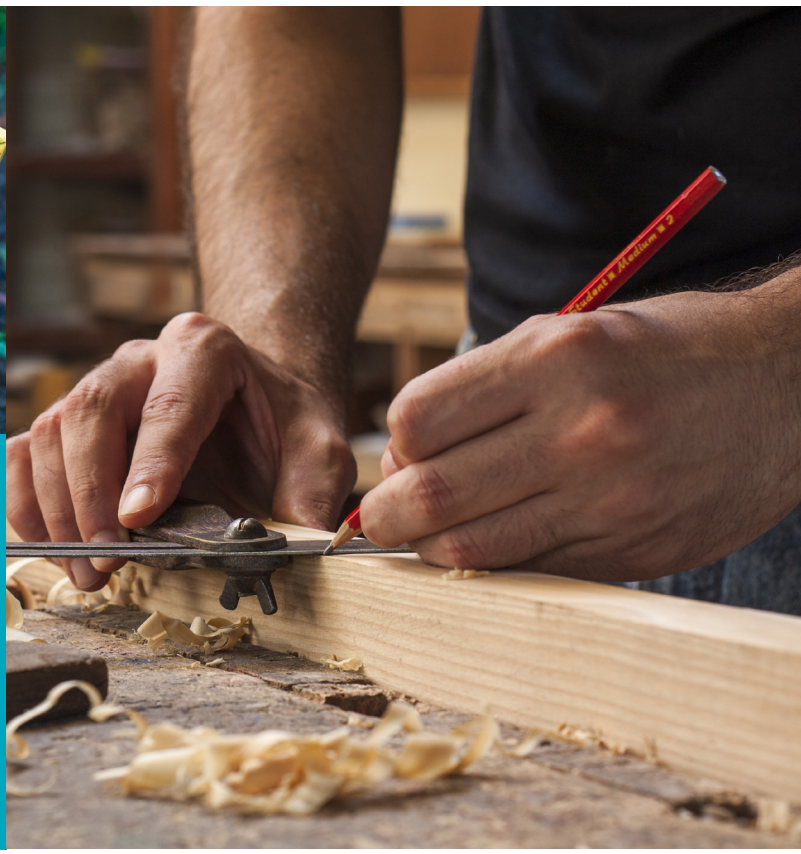


Supporting Rehabilitation: A pilot study exploring the role of community and land based models

Key Findings Report
June 2016



RESEARCH WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY

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CONTENTS

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A key findings report on supporting rehabilitation: a pilot study exploring the role of community and land based models.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this report we detail key findings from a pilot study examining the role of community and land based interventions in supporting rehabilitation (it its widest sense), and the potential benefits to those who access them. The research tackled how such interventions and projects could support people's journeys, for example: transitioning from prison to the community, on their recovery journey, desistance readiness, or supporting them to overcome barriers that have a negative impact on their lives. The aim of the study was twofold; to gain further insight into how these projects operate, and to start documenting in a coherent fashion their strengths, outcomes and challenges. This pilot study will identify gaps in knowledge and, in so doing, identify future areas for research.

The pilot study builds on the body of criminal justice system related research undertaken by the team (see Brown et al., 2015a; Brown et al., 2015b; Brown et al., 2016; Bos, 2015; Halliday et al., 2016) and research in the area of community food growing and land based activities (Bos and Kneafsey, 2014; Bos, 2016). The study employed a systematic-based search, review of the literature, and primary data collection with a number of key stakeholders.

This report draws on land based community interventions and provides an opportunity to focus specific attention on those who experience, or have experienced substance misuse, homelessness, poor mental health or have a history of offending (or a combination of these). Land based and community interventions cover a wide spectrum of programmes; for the purpose of this study the criteria adopted for the selected case study interventions included projects that:

- Work with offenders and/ or individuals with life challenging issue (targeted at those involved in the criminal justice system, experiencing substance misuse, or other marginalisation such as homelessness)
- Projects involving the use of land, which included activities such as construction, building and food growing
- Projects delivered by the public, voluntary and community sector
- Projects that utilise a group or community setting.

The title of this report is 'supporting rehabilitation'; we argue for an intersectional approach to rehabilitation (Brown et al., 2016) as our research highlights that successful rehabilitation is the outcome of a complex set of factors that are both within, and outside of, an individual's control. We also recognise that rehabilitation is part of wider (and interconnected) processes linked to concepts such as desistance (the cessation of offending) and resettlement.

2. KEY THEMES IN THE LITERATURE

2a. Key themes: policy and grey literature

It is necessary to understand the current political context underpinning the criminal justice system (CJS) and the role of third sector and voluntary organisations working with marginalised communities. The key themes are detailed in the following section: an overview of the criminal justice system, probation, partnership working and voluntary and community sector organisations, a holistic approach and employment.

Overview of the Criminal Justice System

- There are currently 142 prisons in England and Wales, accommodating over 85,000 offenders. Fourteen prisons are run privately by three companies: SERCO, G4S and Sodexo.
- The number of people incarcerated is continuously increasing. Between 1993 and 2014, the prison population in England and Wales increased by more than 40,000 people (a 91% rise) .
- The average annual cost of keeping someone in prison is £36,2371.
- The reoffending statistics show that 45% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release[1] and reoffending poses vast societal costs of around £7-£10 billion a year.
- The (Coalition) Government's programme 'Transforming Rehabilitation' came into effect in February 2015 (based on 'Transforming Rehabilitation: A strategy for reform' launched in May 2013).
- Under the Government reforms, some prisons are being changed to resettlement prisons with the ambition that they will provide more focused resettlement for offenders who live in the local area, and are nearing their release date (approximately four months before release) (Clinks, 2016).
- Michael Gove, the current Justice Secretary, acknowledges there is a need to consider new and innovative ways of tackling reoffending, which considers the ways in which offenders are being, and can be supported whilst in prison and on release.
- A Ministry of Justice survey[2] , found that nearly all prisoners want to stop offending (97%) (Edgar et al., 2012), however, people face various obstacles, which this initial section of the report will expand on.

Probation

- 'Transforming Rehabilitation' outlines a number of reforms regarding how offenders are managed in England and Wales which now involves outsourcing a large proportion of the probation service.
- The new structure replaces the 35 individual probation trusts with a single National Probation Service (public sector). The National Probation Service (NPS – public sector) is responsible for the management of high risk offenders on release, and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) (private sector).
- NOMS (National Offender Management Service) is the "over-arching organisation responsible for managing offenders and reducing re-offending, with responsibility for both community and custodial offender services." The delivery of prison and probation services in England and Wales is overseen by NOMS which includes both public and contracted prisons, Community Rehabilitation Companies, and the National Probation Service (Clinks, 2016).
- The CRCs came into effect in June 2015 and are responsible for the management of low and medium risk, and short sentenced (less than 12 months) offenders on release.
- The reforms aim to 'reduce reoffending rates whilst continuing to protect the public' and now see market providers as having responsibility for providing supervision and rehabilitation for service users.

Partnership Working and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations

- Probation staff work in a variety of roles and organise and manage the different elements of community orders. This includes unpaid work, group work programmes, and individual supervision and interventions (Home Office and Ministry of Justice, 2015). Probation staff also work with other public, private and voluntary organisations to provide offenders with help with accommodation, employment and education, drug treatment, and debt advice (Clinks, 2016).
- Partnership working is a key part of the reforms; the NPS and the CRCs will "work with a wide range of partners to deliver services, reduce reoffending and protect the public." (Home Office and Ministry of Justice, 2015).
- A central aspect of the reforms by the government is the increased emphasis and central role of partnership working, in particular, VCS organisations delivering services as they are often best placed to meet local needs.
- The Transforming Rehabilitation Programme focuses on putting the majority of probation services out to tender which therefore means that services will be provided by the private and voluntary sector, including social enterprises (Clinks, 2015b). Part of this process involves payment (to providers) based on the reductions in reoffending in which they achieve, with contracts combining elements of fee for service and payment by results (Clinks, 2013).
- Payment by results "is intended to provide financial incentive to deliver agreed reoffending reductions across the whole offender cohort. [Many have] commented [that] PbR and the use of binary outcome measurements would possibly create perverse incentives for providers to 'cherry pick' and not engage with the most difficult-to-engage offenders." (Clinks, 2013:4).
- There is some ambiguity over how delivery will work in practice; Clinks (2013) found that a number of organisations felt the new Contract Package Areas "would be too large to complement

services which could reflect local variations in need adequately." (Clink, 2013). As such, larger third sector organisations are likely to be involved in bidding as lead contractors and part of large partnerships which raises questions around smaller third sector organisations and whether this creates competition between VCS organisations.

- Most VCS organisations focusing on supporting those in the CJS are locally run; the local connection (and commitment and independence of the sector) can give credibility to (ex) offenders who may feel failed by the state. As such, trust can be built and maintained over a sustained period of time with hard to reach (and underserved) groups. Furthermore, the VCS can be more responsive and innovative (compared to the statutory sector); having a holistic outlook means that the VCS can "meet complex individual needs in changing circumstances before, during and after sentencing." (Clinks, 2015a).

- However, research shows that the efforts of the VCS are not enough without the cooperation from other sectors. In particular, there is a greater need for "better joint working between different sectors to prevent people being bounced backwards and forwards between services without anyone taking responsibility for their welfare." (Making Every Adult Matter Coalition, 2015: 20). Research by the Making Every Adult Matter Coalition suggests that decision makers should: 1) listen to frontline voices and tackle stigma, 2) deliver flexible and more joined up services, 3) support people toward independent living (2015: 9).

- VCS organisations vary in size and their income is generated through a number of means: the largest funding stream is from statutory and / or public bodies, then grant funding (some of which are contracts), with a very low proportion through public giving (Clinks, 2015a).

- The increasing demand for services coupled with the decreasing access to funding continues to cause tensions and erode the sector's ability to provide a quality service at the required scale. Furthermore, the majority of the sector is having to make redundancies whilst initiatives such as payment by results take up large amounts of resource as well as policy rhetoric, whilst remaining relatively limited. As more time is spent on funding applications, resources are diverted away from front line activities, which impacts on service users (Clinks, 2015a).

"The voluntary sector working with offenders and their families continue to provide successful and much needed support to their many beneficiaries in a challenging and often shifting policy and commissioning environment. … We have heard that services are reducing as the need of service users is increasing, which should be cause for concern. This is likely to have the most detrimental impact on people who are socially excluded, with multiple and often very complex needs. The right services are required to support people's desistance from crime, work alongside families affected by the Criminal Justice System, and improve the communities that are worst affected by crime and poverty. There is a danger that many essential services will be difficult to access, or become unavailable altogether." (Clink 2015a: 30).

A Holistic Approach

- Those who have experienced incarceration often face multiple challenges; viewing someone's offending history only addresses part of a number of potentially complex issues. For example, half of women in prison are victims of domestic violence, nearly half of men in prison were excluded from school, over 70% of prisoners suffer from more than two mental health disorders, and nearly 65% have alcohol or drug related problems. Furthermore, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups account for around one quarter of the prison population, but for just 9% of the general population. (Clinks, 2015c). This disproportionate representation highlights that this group of offenders are more likely to experience the criminal justice system and associated multiple deprivation.

It is estimated that 58,000 people face problems of homelessness, substance misuse and offend in any one year; people facing multiple needs are in every community. Within the group a majority will have experienced mental health problems, and it should be recognised that women are under-represented in these figures (but despite this face significant and distinct challenges). Furthermore, people from BME communities experience a range of social inequalities which contribute to their experience of multiple needs… Those experiencing multiple needs often have ineffective contact with services, as in most cases services are designed to deal with one problem at a time and to support people with single, severe conditions… People with multiple needs are likely to live in poverty, to experience stigma, discrimination, isolation and loneliness; they are often served by no-one, perceived to be 'hard to reach' or 'not my responsibility' (Making Every Adult Matter Coalition, 2015).

- Common needs relate to health and wellbeing (mental), access to accommodation, and financial stability, with policy changes and welfare reforms having a negative impact on these areas. Clinks (2012: 5) report that "the needs of service users are increasing and becoming more complex … a number of organisations providing services have declined, many existing organisations have tightened their assessment criteria, further reducing the support available to service users."

- The following quote demonstrates the holistic and personable approach needed to work with those facing release:

To be most effective, it [is] important that commissioning recognises that change belongs to the individual; services must be able to mediate links for the offender into the community; and central to this process is resolving conflicts between the offender and his or her community. The last of these is rarely recognised or addressed in practice." (Edgar et al., 2012: 71).

- Due to the often complex and multiple needs facing ex-offenders, this requires a flexible approach which can adapt to individual's personal priorities (Edgar et al., 2012). The importance of an advocate or support when accessing services was key in the Making Every Adult Matter Coalition report (2015). People felt that as well as support from well trained professionals, the support and understanding from those who had already been there could not be substituted. Furthermore, offenders are influenced to change by the people closest to them, highlighting the important role of social networks (Edgar et al., 2012).

- The design of services should take into account the physiological needs of people using a service; this includes the space in which it is delivered which can help people feel more related to and engaged when using services (Making Every Adult Matter, 2015).

- Clinks states that peer mentoring schemes have been proven to be particularly effective, and as such the role of (ex) offenders in providing volunteer support effective for themselves and others facing release.

Employment

- A survey by the Prisoners Education Trust found that 76% of prisoners said that they intended to seek work when they returned to the community. Almost half (44%) expressed interest in volunteering (Prisoners Education Trust, 2011). (Edgar et al., 2012: 7).

- Research with offenders shows a link between employment and perceptions around desistance. Over half of prisoners (68%) in the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction report (SPCR, 2010) said that having a job would be important in helping them to stop reoffending; 48% reported needed help with finding a job on release. Work experience (after release) is also related to reoffending rates – with lower reoffending rates for those who had a paid job to go to and with those not wanting to work having the highest reoffending rates (May et al., 2008 in Edgar et al., 2012: 54).

- In terms of how prisoners would find support in looking for work (from a Prisoners Education Trust Survey) the majority (75%) said they would rely on the Job Centre, just over half (55%) said they would turn to their families, a similar number said they would turn to a recruitment agency. Slightly fewer cited a voluntary organisation, a back-to-work scheme or the prison resettlement unit (Edgar et al., 2012).

- For those facing release, research shows that those who have an address to go to are around three times more likely to have paid work set up compared to those who do not have a place to live (Niven and Olagundaye, 2002 in Edgar et al., 2012: 23).

"Studies show that offending diminishes when offenders gain employment and people who had a job before coming to prison were less likely to reoffend after release (SPCR, 2010 in Edgar et al., 2012: 54).

- Sustaining links and strong networks during time in prison is important; over half of prisoners had jobs or training arranged on release because of pre-existing contacts through family or friends or a former employer. Smaller numbers of offenders with employment had achieved this through prison job clubs, pre-release programmes, prison education departments or the employment service (Crown 2006 in Edgar et al. 2012: 59). Around half of offenders (53% men and 58% women) cited unemployment and a lack of skills as problems that contribute towards reoffending – as such, training is found to be a common feature in prisoners' resettlement needs (Edgar et al., 2012: 66).

This section has highlighted a number of key themes from the policy and grey literature reviewed, including:

- Rising reoffending rates and associated costs (and an increased demand for services)
- Reforms around the opening up of the market for service providers in the CJS, increasing competition
- Changes in probation with the privatisation of CRCs (for high risk offender management)
- Complex and multiple issues facing those in the CJS, including health and subjective wellbeing
- The important role of the VCS in supporting marginalised communities who are often best placed to meet local needs
- The importance of better joint working between sectors
- The importance of peer-support, advocates and social support networks (linked to empowerment)
- The importance of work experience and employment (not to be viewed in isolation).

2b. Key themes: peer reviewed literature

The literature review was conducted following a systematic approach (see Methodology section) which focused on the role of land based interventions in supporting offenders desistance journeys particularly in the transition from prison to the community (as well as the individuals journey of change, who are impacted by a range of life control issues); papers focused on social enterprise models were also looked at. Whilst the full systematic review is not included in this report, the key themes arising from the review are given. For the purpose of this report, the literature can be categorised broadly by three areas 1) horticultural and gardening interventions, 2) social enterprise initiatives, and 3) social support, in the context of working with marginalised communities. The main themes emerging from the literature are outlined below.

1. Horticultural and Gardening Interventions

Firstly, the concept of care farming will be introduced. There are a number of definitions of care farms but what they all have in common is their focus on promoting or providing health and social support for a range of people (usually classified as 'vulnerable'), through farming activities. Care farming can be described as: "the therapeutic use of agricultural landscapes and farming practices" (Hassink, 2003; Haubenhofer et al., 2010, Care Farming UK, 2013 in Bragg et al., 2014). In addition to the above definition, Elsey et al., (2014: 4) emphasise care farming to use "commercial farms and agricultural landscapes", and the use of care farming "as a base for promoting mental and physical health through normal farming activities (Care Farming, 2014)." Whilst the health aims are commonly outlined, Care Farming UK also incorporate social and educational care services in their definition, as well as defining the target group (vulnerable) and also provide further detail around the nature of the activities. Care Farming UK assert that "care farms utilise the whole or part of a farm, provide health, social or educational care services for one or a range of vulnerable groups of people, provide a supervised, structured programme of farming related activities, provide services on a regular basis for participants, and are commissioned to provide care farming services by referral agencies." (www.carefarminguk.org). It should also be noted that care farming is sometimes referred to as social farming and is also seen as a subset within broader green care approaches (Elsey et al., 2014).

Whilst there are over 200 care farms in the UK, the practice of care farming is more common in the Netherlands where there are around 1,000 care farms; in other European countries, there are also high numbers of care farms: France (300), Italy (675), Belgium (300), with 160 in Germany and 100 in Ireland (Elsey et al.,2014). The core principles of care farming identified are around therapeutic, health and social support, through farming activities, for a range of 'vulnerable' clients, on a long term basis (as opposed to a one off visit), with Elsey et al., (2014) recognising the difference in the degree of 'farming' and 'care' on each farm. As such, care farming activities can comprise a diverse range of activities and work with a range of client groups. In recognising that "the care farming approach has been used in an attempt to provide health and social support to a range of people", Elsey et al., (2014) inform that "as such, the intervention does not target any specific conditions" (3). In 2014, Natural England commissioned a review of Care Farming to provide evidence and to assist them in the delivery of care farms. The report was commissioned as "the full extent and potential of these valuable care farming services is … not fully understood by relevant bodies that commission these types of service" and is part of a body of work "to drive up standards and to increase the scale and coherence of service provision." (Bragg et al.,2014, foreword). In terms of future research it is commonly held that in the areas of green care and care farming "there is still a shortage of robust scientific research…despite the large amounts of positive anecdotal and qualitative data." (Bragg et al., 2014: 2). The report will now focus on the key themes from the literature which transpired from the systematic search.

There is a small and varied body of literature focusing on land based interventions targeted at supporting a range of marginalised communities; a gap within this area of current research are studies specifically focusing on change readiness, desistance and rehabilitation. Situated largely within a care farming / therapeutic perspective, the majority of studies focused on horticultural or gardening activities for therapeutic purposes. Included within this body of literature are systematic or critical reviews, which helpfully outline some of the key findings arising from the papers reviewed. For example, Annersted and Währborg (2011) focus on Nature Assisted Therapy (NAT) and ascertain that a small number of reliable studies support "the effectiveness and appropriateness of NAT as a relevant recourse for public health [as] [s]ignificant improvements were found for varied outcomes in diverse diagnoses." (385). York and Wiseman (2012) critically reviewed gardening activities and occupational health. They found the processes of participating in gardening offered satisfying and meaningful methods of recovery for people who are marginalised within society, at the individual and community health level, thus highlighting fundamental links with gardening and wellbeing (2012). Focusing on the role of care farming, Elsey et al., (2014) set out a protocol to test the cost-effectiveness of care farms in the UK, with a focus on offenders as participants who are serving community orders, and improving quality of life for offenders. The therapeutic purposes of care farms are widely acknowledged, nevertheless "[s]tudies to date have been qualitative or observational, with limited empirical evidence of the effectiveness of care farms in improving health and well-being." (Elsey et al., 2014: 1). Whist this pilot study is broader than care farming, the findings of this study when published will be of significant interest. To summarise, all review studies note the limited amount of papers identified in their respective studies.

More empirically focused studies have looked at gardening-based projects working with a diverse range of communities such as offenders, homeless, refugees, and drug and alcohol users, from a range of countries. Generally, much of the literature in this area comes from a US perspective (e.g. Grabbe et al., 2015; Chisholm et al., 2012; Hale et al.,2005). However, other countries do feature, but are few (UK, Australia and Korea for example). Studies report on the role of gardening interventions and their positive impacts on the participants, particularly in terms of health, wellbeing and social interaction (Grabbe et al., 2015; Sempik et al., 2014). For homeless women involved in a gardening project, this activity "interrupted the participants' negative ruminations, offering stress relief and elements of social inclusion and self-actualization." (Grabbe et al., 2015: 258). Participating in gardening activities was also identified to increase self-efficacy, self-confidence and empowerment for the homeless (Brandt-Meyer and Butler, 1999; Pearce and Seals, 2006). Such benefits of being involved in gardening activities are on the individual but also collective level based on 'interactional meanings', 'group experience', and 'personal and emotional meanings' (Brendt-Meyer, 1999). The opportunities for social interaction according to Sempik et al., (2014) "may, therefore, promote social inclusion among vulnerable and isolated groups." (313). For a refugee community, community food growing supported migrants' connectedness in terms of community belonging and reconnecting with agriculture (Harris et al., 2014). Also employing a health and wellbeing framework, Seifert (2014), who focused on Eco-therapy provision for people with alcohol related problems in Northern Ireland, calls for a green prescription policy (which is being piloted in Scotland) to realise the benefits of eco-therapy. This fundamentally highlights the current lack of wide spread, structural support for nature, and land based therapeutic interventions, working with people experiencing a number of health problems. It should be noted that both women and men have been the focus of studies, individually (rather than in a mixed setting) and it is put forward that "[g]ardening is an inexpensive and positive intervention for a population with a high incidence of mental illness." (Grabbe et al., 2015: 258).

Whilst appreciating the need for studies to continue to employ a socio-health lens, fundamentally the pilot study aims to focus on those desisting from a range of issues (criminality and substance use) as a framework, also including factors that impact desistence journeys (such as homelessness and employment). This section includes key themes from the literature which focus on those in the criminal justice system. Studies have focused on horticultural inventions within secure settings (Brown et al., 2015; Chisholm and Goodyear, 2012; Lee et al., 2004; Grimshaw and King, 2002), and in community settings with participants on probation (Hale et al., 2005). It is recognised that there is however, a lack of information around horticultural activities in secure settings (Chisholm and Goodyear, 2012). Existing studies have looked at horticultural programmes for vocational skills and a secondary goal of promoting and enhancing life skills, for women (Chisholm and Goodyear, 2012). For Lee et al., (2014), a horticultural programme in Korea was shown to help with the control of anger for incarcerated women. The educational, individual and communal benefits have been identified by Brown et al., (2015) who also report on health and welling benefits to substance misusing male offenders engaged in a horticultural programme, in conjunction with a range of other outcomes such as opportunities for learning, a recovery community, engaging in an environment that supports change. Brown et al., (2015) also advocate the need for institutional support and positive partnership working. For participants on probation, Hale et al., (2005) found that engaging with a horticultural programme not only resulted in an increase in self-esteem and horticultural knowledge, but also reduced recidivism rates compared to non-programme participants. Recommendations for future research have featured in these studies which call for longer and larger studies (to follow recidivism for example), the utilisation of quantitative and qualitative methods and the use of control groups, thus recognising the need for a stronger evidence base generally, longitudinal studies, and additional research that examines evidence of the effectiveness of such activities (Hale et al., 2005; Chisholm and Goodyear, 2012; Sempik et al., 2014). It can therefore be ascertained that there is a lack of evidence around the longer term impact of engagement in such programmes, for a range of marginalised groups, in terms of supporting participant's desistance journey of change (and the various factors impacting this).

2. Social Enterprise Initiatives

Resulting from the search was literature around social enterprise initiatives working with a range of groups including homeless substance abusers (Conahan, 2012), those recovering from mental illness (Gilbert et al., 2013), those with disabilities and addictions (Lysaght et al., 2014), and offenders (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011; Cosgrove et al., 2011; Hunter and Boyce, 2009; Harley, 2014). Therefore, similar to the previous section, papers are predominantly focused on one particular 'group'. Again, a variety of geographical locations are represented in the literature including USA, Norway, and UK.

It is important to outline the philosophy of social enterprises, as stated within the literature: "Social enterprises are commonly defined as "a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners" (DTI, 2002, 13)." (Cosgrove et al., 2011: 2). Social enterprises share five defining features (Pearce, 2003 in Cosgrove et al., 2011).

"1. Having a social mission or purpose, for example, creating employment, training or the provision of local services

2. Achieving that social purpose by engagement, on some level through the production of goods or services within the marketplace

3. Holding assets and wealth for the benefit of the community rather than for the benefit of individuals

4. Ensuring the democratic involvement of members of the organisation within its governance

5. Having accountability to members of the enterprise venture and the wider community." (2).

Social enterprises can therefore be an innovative means of finding longer term solutions to assisting people long disconnected from the jobs market, in finding a route into work, employment, education and training." (Cosgrove et al., 2011: 2). Social enterprise initiatives may be in the form of providing employment opportunities for a range of communities (e.g. Lysaght et al., 2012; Hunter and Boyce, 2009), or they may provide other services such as housing (Conahan, 2012). In Conahan's (2012) study, outcomes were better when housing was provided for participants of a substance abuse treatment programme; furthermore, they found that wrap around services reduce the incidences of relapse for recovering drug and alcohol users. The majority of the literature focuses on the creation of employment opportunities, either through directed employment or skills and training. Those with mental illnesses (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and anxiety) were the focus of Gilbert et al.'s (2013) study who found that small numbers of people with mental illnesses were employed (average of 3-6.5) in firms confined largely to manufacturing, service industry, recycling, horticulture and catering, and most people had been employed for over two years. Some firms were funded by a mental health charity or the NHS and over two thirds of firms liaised with mental health services. Whilst Gilbert et al., (2013) inform of the significant potential of social firms, they are however currently an underdeveloped sector in the UK. In a Norwegian case study, social firms created opportunities for contact between participants and the public helping to break down barriers

and reduce stigma. Thus, Lysaght et al., (2012) found that social firms can be a viable alternative "for creating employment options and training and for enhancing social integration of people with mental health disabilities." (455). Challenges noted include the problematic short term nature of project funding. Furthermore, questions regarding relapse include how to take a long term view point for people in recovery (Conahan, 2012). These challenges can also apply to those on a desistance journey experiencing setbacks.

Studies have looked at the role of social enterprises and employment opportunities specifically for offenders. It is commonly recognised that "[e]x-offenders face numerous challenges once released from a period of incarceration. In addition to financial, social, family, and community integration, they face enormous barriers to employment." (Harley, 2014: 10). The challenges facing offenders transitioning into the community and employment are not new, however the magnitude and scale of issues are, and include: employers' attitudes toward those with criminal records, a lack of stable housing, substance misuse, mental health and other health issues, financial concerns, educational challenges, and legal barriers; often, unmet practical needs and delays in the transition to the community mean that the pursuit for employment is also delayed (Harley, 2014). Thus, viewing employment as a singular aspect is often unhelpful as it cannot be viewed in isolation from the other aspects of offenders' lives. Initiatives aimed at preparing for employment feature in some prisons. Hunter and Boyce (2009) found that offenders engaging in a prison training programme found a number of benefits such as opportunities to obtain a qualification and work experience, undertaking a fulfilling role in comparison to other employment opportunities in prison, and an increase in self-confidence. The importance of stable employment for desistance (and successful re-entry) is commonly recognised, but as Harley (2009) highlights, ex-offenders tend to be employed in unskilled and low paying jobs - educational attainment highly correlates with employment and rates of recidivism for ex-offenders. However, due to a range of complexities already set out, mainstream employment may not be suitable for a large proportion of ex-offenders.

In terms of the evidence base for employment and reoffending, despite the clear connections in the prevention and reduction of offending (Crow, 1989, Farrington et al, 1996, Maruna, 2001 in Cosgrove et al., 2011), there is a lack of documentation on the activities and achievements of social enterprises, particularly in relation to their impact on reoffending. Drawing on the work of Cosgrove and Neill (2011) and Cosgrove et al., (2011) the following section provides refreshing insight into the subject of social enterprise initiatives in reducing reoffending in a (UK) political context. In line with other literature the report has so far drawn upon, Cosgrove and Neill (2011) assert that in the area of social enterprises and reoffending, there remains a need for robust critical analysis over time beyond the delivery of outputs to determine whether programmes are positively impacting on reoffending. The lack of a robust evidence base (recognised by NOMS) is often due to lack of expertise, obligation or funding within social enterprises, and is due to the small scale nature of social enterprises. This makes it difficult to ascertain the full impact of programmes and "evidence of success tends to be number-driven without any detailed evaluation of social value or impact." (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011: 51).

As outlined in section 2a, the VCS provide a key resource in terms of supporting ex-offenders. In the context of the 'rehabilitation revolution', solutions to the problem of increasing reoffending rates must be innovative and creative in light of rapidly reducing budgets (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011). In regard to this, and the challenges facing social enterprises aiming to support ex-offenders, key learning points are now set out:

- There is often a lack of awareness (regarding social enterprises) in prison and probationary institutions and services; embedding an ethos is challenging in light of the complexities around demonstrating social impact and value. One proposition is to also integrate this within NOMS core standards and targets [e.g. priority areas].

- Social enterprises should complement existing criminal justice system initiatives, and have an acute understanding of the pressures, challenges and stigmatisation faced by ex-offenders following a conviction or time spent in prison.

- Smaller social enterprises may experience difficultly engaging with prison and probation (limited finances and scope) but may have stronger links with relevant agencies and support services (compared to larger projects) to support desistance.

- A major challenge is balancing the tensions between social and economic objectives. If projects are financially sustainable, a viable business model can be developed (addressing any reservations about profit making) and dependence on grants will decrease. Balancing personal values with the demands of the market some social enterprises have engaged with community payback for example despite questions they may have around the disciplinary nature of the scheme.

- Becoming non-dependent for survival through diversifying and developing services to offenders and local communities comes with approaching the social enterprise as a business model.

- Self-initiated participation rather than imposing strict discipline is advocated, whereby supervision is like to promote ownership and responsibility.

- Referring to desistance and the Good Lives model which 1) encourages offenders to take responsibility for their rehabilitation and 2) highlights the significance of equal partnerships between offender and criminal justice system professionals (Ward and Maruna, 2007). Therefore, it is desirable for offenders to be aware of the way social enterprises are governed and run, and to be involved in their operation and development; this transparency creates a sense of commitment, value and ownership.

- Therefore, a system is needed that enables offenders to desist from reoffending of their own will, rather than as a result of being coerced through monitoring and enforcement (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011).

For Cosgrove and O'Neill (2011) offering alternative approaches to offender management, social enterprises working in partnership with criminal justice agencies are at a promising stage in their development in the UK. They can complement other rehabilitation interventions (in the CJS) around providing valuable work experience (and roots into employment) but can also address offending behaviour by restoring self-esteem, offering a renewed sense of purpose, empowering individuals. Nevertheless, this is not without its challenges. There is a need for social enterprises to secure the trust and confidence of prison and probation personnel, manage complex working arrangement and importantly, demonstrate their impact on reoffending, 'to achieve a more prominent place in the market of offender management' (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011). To conclude this section, Muñoz (2010), also promotes a need to better investigate the role of social enterprise more broadly, in terms of tackling social exclusion more generally, and creating spaces of empowerment for marginalised and excluded groups.

3. Social support

Although comprising few studies, this section is nevertheless an important one which complements the existing themes in the review so far. The papers reflect the importance of social relationships, in the form of social support networks (Pettus-Davis et al., 2011) and a health-mentoring scheme (Dooris et al., 2013). Both interventions use former prisoners in their models, in one paper to promote reduced relapse to substance misuse and crime (Pettus-Davis et al., 2011) and in another, to use an Offender Health Training service to improve the health of offenders, improve their access to mainstream services, to help reduce health inequalities, to facilitate rehabilitation, and improve job prospects for ex-offenders through employment as health trainers (Dooris et al., 2013). Social support interventions are seen as a potentially effective, low cost resource in light of the need to identify interventions that will reduce the high costs associated with re-offending, which has been neglected in the literature (Pettus-Davis et al. 2011). However, for Dooris et al., (2013) constraints meant that the longer-term outcomes were unable to be identified, however, but promising trends were revealed regarding behaviour change and self-perceived health and wellbeing, and how the initiative has helped probation clients tackle interwoven problems and build hope and self- belief. "Of particular importance was the health trainers' experience of the criminal justice system, which resonated with and inspired clients, developing trust and motivation to change." (199). Thus, this model has shown to be "effectively implemented within the probation setting, making a valuable contribution to the improvement of offenders' health and well-being by working in ways that acknowledge the connections between personal lifestyle and wider determinants of health." (199). Future research to explore the effectiveness of social support models are called for; Dooris et al., (2013) state that "it will be increasingly important to develop services that highlight these links and to invest in appropriate evaluation that can generate further learning about 'what works and why'" (Dooris et al., 2013: 199), which is in line with other recommendations outlined.

The literature therefore outlines a number of themes, including:

- The number of reported benefits associated with land-based (namely horticultural) activities for a range of participants (although from a small body of literature), including the individual and community benefits associated with horticultural activities.

- Horticultural and gardening activities largely approached using a therapeutic / health framework

- Indications of the importance of peer – support and peer – mentoring for desistance

- The importance of institutional support for outside interventions

- Employment opportunities having a positive effect on desistance, albeit the presence of labour market marginalisation

- The tendency to focus on / target one particular group of community of people facing marginalisation

- The need for more robust and longitudinal research, and the role of evidence in promoting and substantiating the role of interventions / social enterprise activities (in terms of social value).

- The report will now outline the methodological approach and introduce the case studies, before focusing on the key themes from the qualitative research.

3. METHODOLOGY

The literature review was conducted following a systematic approach to ensure that searching and reviewing the literature was undertaken rigorously. The team devised a search term list and a number of databases to search and search terms were divided throughout the team and applied to the chosen databases. The focus of the systematic review was the role of land based interventions in supporting offenders journeys of change particularly in the transition from prison to the community (or individuals impacted by a range of life control issues); papers focused on social enterprise models were also looked at. The literature review focused on interventions targeted at adults (as opposed to youth) and only peer reviewed papers have been included. Whilst the full systematic review is not included in this report, the key themes arising from the review are presented in the following section.

Description of case study projects

Following a systematic search of the literature, and reviews of a range of literatures, visits to a number of projects took place where observational data was collected. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with staff members from selected projects. In total, nine stakeholders (project staff / initiators and commissioners) were interviewed from a number of charitable, third sector and public body organisations in The Midlands and Devon (England, UK)[4] . The stakeholders interviewed are from (or support) organisations working with people currently experiencing 'life control' issues - a term used by one of the stakeholders which seems appropriate for the range of issues people who engage with the case studies experience. The table below outlines the case studies included in this study. It should be noted that many more similar initiatives exist nationally and the case studies included in this report are therefore presented as examples. A range of case studies have been included in the pilot study: a local authority funded community-based project for people experiencing substance misuse, a faith based intervention using the land to support people with life control issues, a care farm working with adults with severe learning difficulties, and pupils from disadvantaged areas, and a land-based community project working with offenders released on a temporary licence (ROTL) and men in the community on licence. Furthermore, a stakeholder from a horticultural intervention for substance misusing offenders in a secure setting took part in the study which highlighted some similar themes for interventions in the community and in prison. For the purpose of this pilot study, it was necessary to talk to a range of stakeholders to gain a wider is a number of common themes, which are outlined in the following section.

Project	Location	Model	Members/Service Users	Age/Size	Number of Interviews
Project 1	Worcestershire (rural)	Faith based charity and business model, focused on the land, and construction.	Life control issues (homeless, substance misuse, marginalised, benefit dependent, ex-offenders).	Running since 2010 (evolving model, registered as a charity in 2015) 4 x staff (F/T and P/T) Averaging 10 to 12 clients plus approx. 5 volunteers twice a week, plus a school group one day per week with average of 7 pupils.	x 3 Stakeholder Interviews
Project 2	Northamptonshire (central - urban)	Public health funded community intervention in Northampton town centre (and other sites across the county) providing various activities (including allotment sites)	Adults experiencing or with a history of substance misuse (and their families)	Operating since around 2005 Around x 30 paid staff. Volunteers and mentors are people who have stopped being supported. 1000 members across 3 sites.	x 2 Stakeholder Interviews
Project 3	Worcestershire (rural)	Care Farm (food growing and animal rearing)	Adults with learning disabilities. Disengaged school children from deprived areas.	Operating since 2000 8 x staff (F/T and P/T) Approximately x 80 adult places and x 24 pupil places per week currently.	x 1 Stakeholder Interviews
Project 4	Devon (rural)	Land-based community project	Released on temporary license (ROTL) and men in the community on licence..	Started in July 2013 4 x staff (F/T and P/T) Arts co-ordinator; 1 x counsellor; 1 x researcher (funded, P/T) 3 regular volunteers (P/T) 4 mentors (in training) 15-20 men per week engaged at any one time	x 2 Stakeholder Interviews
Another stakeholder was interviewed from a national charity working with substance misusing offenders in a category B prison on a horticultural intervention (funded by Public Health) (see Brown et al., 2015), with experience of working for a number of community food growing projects in The Midlands thus providing valuable insight into interventions in the community and in secure settings.					

4. KEY FINDINGS

This section of the report presents the key themes arising from the stakeholder interviews, and draws on the literature presented in section 2 of the report.

4a. The role of projects

4b. Ethos, approach and practicalities

4c. Effectiveness and outcomes

4d. Challenges

4e. Looking forward

4a. The role of projects

This initial section of the findings provides understanding around the focus of case study projects and what they aim to achieve. The box below displays quotes from the key stakeholders managing or initiating projects, to illustrate the projects aims.

Providing alternative spaces

Before focusing on how the projects operate, it is important to understand their rationale (i.e. why they feel there is a need for their projects). The data shows that ultimately, projects are responding to a need, one that is reported throughout the literature in section 2. For Project 1 particularly, being faith-based means that they are driven primarily by a Christian ethos, which is a key motivator for the work they do. The following quote reflects part of their wider motivation, "our hope is the gospel, that's why we're doing it, out of that place, the tool we're using is working the land..." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). A stakeholder from Project 4 reports how their project offers something which isn't available elsewhere, "I have never yet come across a project that is totally dedicated to resettling men who are currently prisoners, that's why I think it's different… we work with prisoners and men on licence, they might have suspended sentences so they are still classed as offenders…" (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). What is shared across the majority of the interviews is the desire to provide personal, long term focused support for people in the community who are currently experiencing negative circumstances. For example, one interviewee notes how, for them, the need is about helping people with their recovery (long term support) and not just providing treatment for them.

Project 1

"to engage individuals that were marginalised through it could be a wide range of reasons, whether it be homelessness, whether it be addiction, whether it be ill health for whatever reason to help them grow in confidence and to help them understand what their potential is or could be and provide them with a platform to be able to move forward really." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1).

"it's homeless, mental health and addiction...it's usually those three things mixed in with more, not always homeless as such... but they may be in a hostel, we work with the hostels too, and [ex-offenders - that should be a fourth category." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1).

"my heart is very much to take people out of their bedsits, the chaos they're in, bring them out to a good place and get alongside people." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1).

Project 2

"It's about trying to provide activities, services for people who are in recovery to keep busy and active." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

Project 3

"the bottom line is to connect land and their food…we say we offer training, education and therapeutic opportunities for all members of the community." (Stakeholder, Project 3).

Project 4

"The aims are to get men from prison, who are currently prisoners or people who have been released on licence, back into employment and community, to provide funding to do this and to inform our community." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4).

"We're focusing on both treatment and recovery. The two go together and one without the other isn't good for us because we know that people, in particular the substance misuse problem … the majority of people do have a relapse … at some stage in their journey. We want to make sure that we've got the support mechanism, whether it be in accommodation, education, training, around them so that if they do falter that we're saying to them you've not failed, you've merely had a pause in your journey and just rekindle, regroup, come back again and let's go to the next stage. Let's get to the end of the journey … but from the outset we need to make sure that the individual is aware that they will get to the end of their journey if they want to." (Commissioner, Project 2).

Throughout the interviews it was widely acknowledged that people are on a journey, as well as appreciating that participants are unlikely to face a particular issue in isolation. As the following quote shows, Project 2, in addition to supporting people on their recovery journey, also creates a space for participant's families to engage with (reflecting the multifaceted nature of people's lives).

"the intention is to help them address those issues with regards to substance misuse, get them the support that they need, get them off the substance, get them back into the community as fully functioning members of the community, so the whole function is around helping recovery … and it's not just the individual that we're helping support, it's maybe also the siblings, their parents or their partners because they're not the only ones who are affected. What we're trying to do is keep the family together, making sure that they're not being kicked out of their properties so that they're actually staying within their families, but if not then we've got the mechanism in place to help support them." (Commissioner, Project 2).

Stakeholders, from working with their members or clients, recognise the need for the provision of an alternative type of support. Being able to provide something 'different' than what is currently available, was common throughout the interviews.

"we restructured our induction earlier in the year, so our induction now does not ask them about their drug use so it has to be a nice experience for them. So how I sold it is, what we want is someone to come here have an induction when they get home their friends say 'how did you get on at [Project 2] and they say, 'amazing, they didn't ask me about my drugs, they were all nice to me, they gave me a hot drink, all the services are free', 'are you going to go back', 'too right', as opposed to 'how did you get on at [Project 2]', 'same shite, all about my drugs, it's a load of bollocks', 'are you going to go back', 'no way'. And that's the difference, that's what we need really." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

Providing support that builds on statutory support offered which is centred on relationships is also recognised. "I think increasingly there is always a need for activities that can engage with people, that goes beyond the weekly meeting with the key worker, that builds a relationship with people that can speak positively into their lives, so I think that's a big part of what we are doing." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). What is common across the interviews is the non-judgemental approach stakeholders take in viewing the people they work with, which also moves beyond trying to approach people through the lens of a singular or specific issue. "I think with lots of these people they have labels on them, so if you're an alcoholic, that's what you are and depression, that's what you are, and they're disgusting labels really because they imprison people, because that's all you are an alcoholic and you're thinking, do you know what, there's more to you than that. The label isn't really what defines you, let's see what actually defines you a bit more, come and do something, so break out of that." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). A stakeholder from Project 4 reports how they also aim to make people feel "normal", and shows in the following quote their mind-set behind this.

"We don't give up and we believe in people really… everybody has you know, it's a really crass thing to say but everyone does have some good in them and if you start to understand the bigger picture, you can't just look at the crime, it's the life around that you have to look at… so for one man's crime that he is tried for, say he was done for burglary, yet around that life his family may be in chaos, he may be an addict, he may have been stealing for years, his influences have probably been appalling, he'd have had very few role models but if you just looked at his crime and tried to assess what the issues were there you'd make the wrong judgement, the support you put in place just because he's seen as a burglar actually wouldn't be relevant to what's going on in his life, so you've got to look at the bigger picture around one individual… you know you can take that for any sentence, any crime really there is always another life story behind it and that is really what you have to try and help people move away from." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4).

This type of person-centred approach is also seen in the prison horticultural intervention, as one stakeholder reflects. "We don't judge anyone, we don't read their files before they come out, we have got no preconceptions of who they are and what they have done, where they are in their recovery even really. We just meet them on an individual first time basis and then we form our opinion of them from day one. We treat them like we would any other person, regardless." (Project worker, Prison). Providing more holistic support in terms of this being beyond the space of the project can be seen particularly in the example of Project 1. Here, the project may assist people when coming out of prison or attending meetings where they benefit from some form of advocacy. Being an independent charity allows for such support to take place, as they are not constrained by the regulations of statutory organisations.

"I'm not saying I'm against the agencies, but I suppose that next step of struggling against people who've got contracts and all that sort of stuff YSS, probation, to break into that would be really difficult... and it's a job. Ours is more of a lifestyle, so a lot of the times I'm an advocate for people as well so I go to the job centre with people. So there's a couple of lads from prison I go to the job centre with them. They're fearful and they can't communicate. They can get sanctioned

just like that, they just can't deal with those things. So its meeting people where they're at and that really sounds harsh on some of those agencies, but they haven't got the time to be able to do that." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1).

Whilst the role of mentoring and advocacy will be discussed further on, it is clear that the case study projects 'offer' something different. Project 4 also has an outward facing mentality, by involving the wider community in the project space. "…the community are involved and willing to support us and that's a big outcome…I think we are slowly spreading the word mainly via the blog about the intricacies of prison life, and that's it's not a great way to be treating people, I mean prison itself causes so many negative outcomes." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). The projects are opportunistic in the sense that they have identified a need for this sort of provision and awareness raising that doesn't currently exist. This resonates with the literature stating that VCS organisations are credible and responsive (Clinks, 2015a), and in the current climate, social enterprise initiatives must be innovative and creative (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011). Furthermore, it is recognised that VCS have the ability to create spaces where people can feel related to (Making Every Adult Matter Coalition, 2015). However, there is further scope to explore these alternative spaces. The type of provision they provide is detailed in the following section.

4b. Ethos, approaches and practicalities

Ethos

A key theme throughout the data is the person-centred ethos of projects. This appears to be fundamentally relational, in comparison to other services participants can access, "relationship is key. I'm not slagging off agencies all at but that's the difference between me and an agent really...I feel that I can say that, having been in policing, you didn't build relationships you had a job to do...so I can spend time with people and build their trust and bring them up here. So that's what it's all about really, time and people." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). For Project 4, building relationships is also central to their ethos. "So they're with us from anything from 6 – 9 months, even a year and in that time you start to understand who they really are and that's what it's about, it's building a personal relationship with an individual and a trusting relationship too… allowing them to take some ownership and sense of pride in what they're doing and moving them away from how they are treated in prison and allowing them again what they would say was normalising, they are allowed to be normal… so once we've established who they are and possibly what their difficulties are, we then try and build on that and build on their strengths… And once we've got to that stage we try to allocate them or find them employment and support them into that and even beyond that we'd find them accommodation…" (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). Another stakeholder from Project 4 emphasises the importance of long-term individual relationships. "Prisoners come from the environment where it's very dog eat dog in there and anyone who's nice to you is only nice for a reason and then it's going to come back and bite you… and then they realise I think that takes a couple of months and then they actually blossom and you see them blossom and they've got that you know such self-confidence…" (Stakeholder 2, Project 4). In terms of who projects support (Table 1), Project 2 engages with people experiencing substance misuse as that is what they are funded for. Similarly, Project 3 supports disadvantaged pupils as they have a contract with a college, and "our biggest both financially and numerically, our biggest client group is adults with severe learning disabilities. And basically the students contribute to running the acre and a half that we have got." (Stakeholder, Project 3). Project 4 working with offenders released on temporary licence, has been successful in obtaining funding from a diversity of grant making bodies. The largest is the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund. This covers 60% of total project costs for three years, the majority of which is revenue funding (contributing towards staff salaries, training material, travel, evaluation and overheads), whilst capital funding has helped build the main training base for the project . Project 1, not depending on specific funding criteria, still has a particular remit for who they support, although this is broader than the other two projects (Box 1). Across the projects, caution was taken to people or groups who may pose a risk to the current group. For example, in the case of Project 3, "No we don't [work with ex-offenders] because of the groups that we have are vulnerable and because they are here every day but an awful lot of referrals from the courts are kids, they are just ones that haven't got caught and quite a lot of them go through the Court proceedings whilst they are here. But as an identifiable group, no we don't." (Stakeholder, Project 3). Not being able to engage with people on the sex offender register, or those who were deemed high risk was also discussed in the interviews.

Providing relational and holistic support is made possible through the different models employed by the case studies, which are fairly informal and accessible in nature. Projects 1, 2 and 4 are free for participants and the adults in Project 3 now pay for their places from their personal budgets. The following quote shows how activities are largely driven by what the members want to engage with in Project 2, "everything is free, a big draw is the gym, most people usually come here to use our gym and then from there they spin off and use lots of other services/activities. A full timetable is available five days a week, we have a cafe, we have a hot meal every afternoon for £2.50, we have loads of different things going on from karaoke sessions to arts and crafts, to music group, job club, and most of it comes from the members." (Stakeholder, Project 2). Whilst the ethos of all the projects is not formal, there is an expectation to engage.

Approach

Undoubtedly what is evident in the findings is that a lot of the case studies adopt a holistic person-centred approach. These projects offer holistic support which spans across various aspects of people's lives on a fairly informal and regular basis (as opposed to engaging in a 6 week programme for example); the stability of these spaces is recognised as important (Harley, 2014). As outlined previously, many services are geared towards dealing with one need at a time (Making Every Adult Matter Coalition, 2015) and therefore do not have the time or remit to provide holistic support, something which is becoming increasingly important at a time where the needs of service users are growing and the support available to people is decreasing (Clinks, 2015c). Providing this holistic support mechanism goes some way to meeting the identified need and as stated in the previous section is built on relational interactions.

"it was a farm based project but I think what we really began to realise is that for individuals to move forward from where they are at we need to begin to develop a sort of holistic approach which isn't just about how you entertain someone a day a week or two days a week and it's not just about can you give someone the skills to be able to get someone a job, there's a whole raft of support that people might need from housing, from relationships, from communication, from life skills and all sorts of things, and really this project is positioning itself as a tool to be able to assist with that. As a project objective it would be that, to facilitate in that journey ... working with people through all those different areas to help them achieve their potential." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1).

The relational side of projects offers something different to other services people may access. Whilst representatives from one of the case studies do not see themselves as mentors, the term will be used for the purpose of the report. For Project 1 three staff members essentially provide mentoring and life support to their members, on an informal basis, their approach to this is outlined. "They've got the council on at them, they've got the old bill on at them, then probation on at them and so they see everybody as authority and the last thing they need is the church on to them as well. I kind of hate that word mentoring because I'd never want to put them in that class really that I'm mentoring you, because it's distant and formal and in some ways they mentor you, so it's a two-way thing." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). The commitment for personalised support, reflected by another stakeholder from Project 1, shows that there is a sense of equality created in the project space.

"I suppose on paper we are here to support people that are sort of struggling with change .... Although we set out to support guys like that, I think probably what you begin to realise is that for ourselves and also for the volunteers it is as much about them and as much about their growth and our growth as it is for other people. And in that sense I suppose once you have considered that, then you begin to conclude well actually maybe it's more about just working with people and learning how to do life together.... so not wanting to put a label on anyone, you could almost lump everyone in the same boat, well we are all here just working out how to do life together. Because often whatever their challenge is, part of the support we offer and the way that we operate means that their challenge becomes our challenge." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1).

The type of approach taken by Project 1 (underpinned by their Christian values) is based on loving, non-judgemental relationships with marginalised people and creating a supportive environment which is something they consider as fundamentally important.

"I want to be gospel here, is that alright? I'd just say the Good Samaritan. So I say they need time, they need help with injuries, and with the wounds they've got and they need carrying at times and you know, and love. That's the bottom line of it, I mean that might sound a bit wishy washy but I think they know when people are just a project and really a lot of them want fathering, they want friends and they want people to share stuff with. A lot of them are lonely and isolated and just crippled with stuff, they've got nobody to hear." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1).

The communal aspect and links with (and educating) the wider community is inherently important for Project 4 "…we positively encourage people to mix with other people who they probably would never have mixed with before, and vice versa, and that answers another of our aims were we try to inform the community about the difficulties of these men's lives and the impossibility of trying to resettle if the community won't accept them." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). For Project 2, creating a communal environment is also important. This project is much larger in scale and comprises a model with various layers of mentors which allows them to support a larger number of people, beyond the capacity of the three core staff members. This model is based on membership; members may then become a volunteer, and then a volunteer mentor and may then be recruited by the project, (or may move on). The following quote shows the different layers of mentoring which again creates a friendly / community environment.

"What we have identified is that mentoring, under the mentoring umbrella falls into 3 kind of categories, the first bit is something we would call a 'member's mate' and what we mean by that and this is really evident that I will be sat at a computer, someone will sit at the next computer, never met this person before they can't switch it on, so after 5 minutes I go, hit that button there mate, oh cheers mate, then a discussion is initiated, so it's this kind of thing that happens quite a lot. And then you have the volunteer bit where someone is volunteering, so they volunteer in the gym and they will say, I don't think you are doing that exercise quite right I think you need to do, so they build a rapport in a conversation, and then we have the structured mentoring, which is contracted, goal centred, task orientated and really kind of in the time frame work….Someone who has been through their recovery, I have got a little bit to offer, I think I could help." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

The aspect of peer-mentoring is embedded in Project 2's model, which is deemed to be helpful for others in their recovery journey, and is achieved by 'retaining' some members. The importance of people who have been on a journey in terms of being a role model for others (Clinks, 2015a; Making Every Adult Matter Coalition, 2015) is also recognised in a prison context, "the prisoners that I work with, they look up to other prisoners that have been on the same kind of journey." (Project worker, Prison). Engaging with people who have had similar experiences is also effective, and incorporates peer mentoring and positive social support networks (Clinks, 2015a; Pettus-Davis et al., 2011; Dooris et al., 2013). Project 1 also retains some of the people that have been supported, who help with the running of the project. "I think probably the reason they have taken ownership is because they have identified the value of the place, brought the vision and felt like 'I really see myself as being part of what is going on there'." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). The stakeholder from Project 2 also highlights the importance of peer – relationships, "so we are trying to think of what next do we need to do for people's recovery and when we look at ourselves and the stuff that we have as regular people that people should, mortgages, buying your own house, you know if someone, if one of our members wanted to buy, where do they get that knowledge from you know so we need to have mentors that can provide that information, these are the steps that you may need to consider." (Stakeholder, Project 2). Section 4d outlines some of the dilemmas stakeholders face around this aspect.

For Project 4, there is ongoing connection with people involved in the project. "Nobody's left… nobody has left, everyone has stayed in touch… even yesterday a guy who left over a year ago phoned me to tell me that his girlfriend is pregnant… so yeah, nobody really leaves one way or another, one of the men who was there, one of the very very first men over 3 years ago he comes back a day a week at the moment, you know they don't leave … they don't really stop being connected and we encourage that, I mean that's part of the long term support…" (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). This personalised and holistic approach for Project 1, and the relationships developed means that they can challenge people in situations where it is needed, "some people have been brought to kind of confront the reality of their choices." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). This is partly achieved by providing a work ethic environment which is detailed in section 4c of the report. To partly encourage people to think about their behaviour / lives, Project 1 also have a thought of the day, based on scriptures from the Bible in the morning, before activities start, "the reason we do that is because we get people to think about where they want to go, how they want to get there and to challenge them on their values a bit." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). This creates a space for people to be supported in their journeys from the perspective of a 'critical friend'. Recognised within the literature is that people are influenced by the people closest to them (Edgar et al., 2012) and creating spaces

centred on relationship has scope to be effective. An openness is also shown in the following quotes which demonstrate how members are involved to some degree with deciding how the space is used. "We've always done student reviews and student forums so they have always got to say what they want, what they enjoy, what they don't enjoy, what they would like to see more of. So that hasn't really changed, we have always been fairly democratic in a way and inclusive." (Stakeholder, Project 3). For Project 2, as previously suggested, they aim "to provide a service that is right for our members." (Stakeholder, Project 2). Understanding and aiming to meet the often complex and multiple needs of service users is also reflected in the commissioning of the service, by understanding their viewpoints. "We take on board the service users viewpoints because we want to make sure that we're checking the service to meet what the client requires, not what we think they require, but what we're trying to make sure is that we are dealing with the whole picture, not with one element of it." (Commissioner, Project 2). This inclusive approach is part of the ethos and community feel; ensuring democratic involvement is a defining feature of social enterprise as recognised by Pearce (2003 in Cosgrove et al. 2011).

Practicalities – providing positive spaces

As outlined in the previous table, three of the projects are located in rural areas and one project in an urban locality. The benefits of being in a rural locality are demonstrated by the following quote, and is further discussed in section 4c. "I think the rural location of the project is important, I think it's important because it gets people out of… and even in [the local] prison you could argue … it's quite an urban situation in many ways, you are very close to people, so our rural location is quiet, it's peaceful, it's the exact opposite of prison actually and I think it is important, I think for those coming away from urban environments, it's good to get them away, off the streets, we're not pretending to be down with the kids, we're not hip-hop and we're not being a cool probation officer engaging at their level, they come to us because [we] exist, so they engage at [our] level… whatever that might be, but it is certainly not an urban environment …" (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). Building on the key findings so far, projects are important in terms of providing alternative spaces for people. The following quote shows how for Project 2 participants, they are able to access the space on a regular and informal basis.

"we have people who are members have their card they swipe in and out , they use the place as they want, as long as they abide by the rules they can come and go, which was a bit of a problem but now we have introduced ways of targeting people every so often just to check in…very informal…we don't key work, because we just can't do that, that's the way that we function …and people can book time with their recovery champions, one to ones, we have something that we call active floating, where recovery champions grab a coffee and just wander around the café and sit down and say how are you doing, I haven't seen you for a while, so we have a lot of that important informal stuff happening." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

It is not only about the physical space and the activities provided, it is also about the interaction between the staff and the members, within a particular space (see Brown et al., 2015) and as shown by the following quote from the stakeholder working in the prison environment. "I think it's probably to do with the freedom that the garden offers, the space away from the confines of the residential unit and the wing and it's partly the way that we do facilitate it. I'm not very good at blowing my own trumpet but I keep being told what you and [name] are doing is brilliant and I say yeah yeah yeah but I suppose in a way, it's how we treat the people that are on the programme." (Project worker, Prison). This is described by the project works as "a whole kind of holistic package like there is at Rye Hill [prison], with all those other things attached to it…[otherwise] it becomes an allotment site then doesn't it." (Project worker, prison). Along with the evidence provided so far, this suggests that it is not only about the activity provided, but also a number of different aspects related to the approach, as outlined in this section. The report will now focus on the outcomes associated with the land.

4c. Effectiveness and outcomes

Benefits of the land

The findings so far have shown that the spaces provided by the case studies take a holistic, longer term social approach, incorporating person-centred (as opposed to addressing a singular issue). The projects comprise a number of dimensions which makes them effective. The interviewees spoke a lot about the benefits of the land. As shown in the following quotes, the outside environment is considered therapeutic. "When you look at lots of people with depression and it's just that heaviness of life focusing it on people, well it just being so heavy on people and you just need something simple to take people out of that. So sowing a seed, going to collect eggs, it just takes people out of that mind-set, out of prison they're into something new you know and I think that's really important." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). Another stakeholder (from the care farm) also goes on to talk about how important nature is for health and wellbeing, as a therapeutic space. "It is absolutely crucial isn't it? We know that there is a nature deficit syndrome and people definitely need to be in contact with nature, animals, plants all that sort of stuff for good mental health and I think that is ordinary people as well as all of these group that we work with who have got identified problems…. We all need to go away to our desert island sometimes don't we." (Stakeholder, Project 3). The therapeutic benefits are well recognised in the literature in terms of health and wellbeing (Annersted and Währborg, 2011; York and Wiseman, 2012; Elsey et al., 2014). Activities such as growing food are reported to provide a sense of achievement, satisfaction and purpose as it is largely tangible. "I mean the thing about gardening is you can see it. You physically see whether you've done it right or not, you know, and there's an end product, so if you've not done it … if you've not nurtured it, you've not grown it right, you don't get the product." (Commissioner, Project 2). Furthermore, food growing is considered an activity suitable for the majority of people. "I think its growth for people who haven't done anything like it before, but also growth in plants, in planting a tomato seed and then seeing it grow and then taking the tomatoes from it, so if you like from seed to table, this is what we're eating, what you've done. Oh right okay, it's taking them through the process....it gives them a sense of achievement, that I was involved in that, and you know you do see the joy in that, you know, it's a process that they think about and that they're involved in and purpose, which lots of people may not have." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). Engagement in food growing therefore yields social outcomes too (Grabbe et al., 2015; Brendt-Meyer, 1999). One stakeholder talks about the numerous benefits of a horticultural intervention particularly in a secure setting, in terms of prisoners' health, and physical and behavioural changes.

"Well I've seen the benefits of it. It obviously depends on the actual individual prison and the space that they've got and the regime and how it all fits in but I mean I've seen it first-hand the benefits at Rye Hill [prison] and they've been significant and seeing a person's health improve. I mean 80% of prisoners have a mental health related issue apparently nationally, and I've had stories told back to me from the Prison Officers on the wings where they've actually seen and witnessed

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a behaviour change of the offender, initially they were aggressive, hard to handle. They've seen a change physically, towards them and they've put it down to the project that they've been on, they've had such a change in personality and we can only put it down … I mean there could be other factors … but I think there are some benefits that they've seen and gleaned from the project." (Commissioner, Project 2).

The following quote by a stakeholder working in the prison, demonstrates the importance of the alternative environment the project creates as well as the project ethos, "the changes that we have seen with the majority of the people that have been through the programme have been quite significant really and it has helped them on so many different levels, it's not just been about learning, sorry teaching people you know to grow their own vegetables, flowers whatever. It's, it covers so many different things but they are embedded into the actual programme and people with very, very complicated personal issues have been able to find, maybe a sense of calm in the garden, in the space where they can take themselves away from the prison environment and in some cases actually discover who they really are. And in other case, come to terms with what they have done and be able to progress and be able to move on and find and draw their own conclusions and be able to move on." (Project worker, Prison). Both in the community and in secure settings, such spaces are considered safe, in addition to wider recognised benefits. "I think space, fresh air, and back to basics you know, I think they're all essential to see growth and just coming round here and having a meal together as well, it's that's why, this place is a real safe place where people are never safe, feel safe. ... it's important that we create the environment to make it safe and attractive for people to come up so I think that safety is a really really big thing." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). As the data and literature shows, activities are more than growing food; the enterprise element and aspect of work for Projects 1 and 4, as well as the communal elements are also key features (Brendt-Meyer, 1999).

"I went up there with them last week and it is fantastic … they have got this shed and they have got seats in there and they have got a cooker and they make bacon butties and it's got a real sense of being out with a bunch of people doing different stuff … it's about that social interaction, it's about working the land, it's about growing stuff. You know it's all there in that little allotment, it's fantastic … they are all out there together, it's brilliant." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

Coupled with personal development, food growing (and related activities) in particular can achieve many things simultaneously and is progressive and transformative. "Well I think it was the challenge of actually seeing the development of the prison. In other words, it wasn't just a project. It had an end result and what the project did for me was it embraced a number of things. It wasn't just about one element and the more you got into it, it was more to do with the fact that they would be learning skills that would be great. It would be an interest for them, a hobby, so there were several factors … so it wasn't just one thing, it had linkages to other things." (Commissioner, Project 2). Engagement in land based activities provides therapeutic benefits that can pave the way for a range of opportunities and skills which are wider than gardening and create potential future prospects (see Hale et al., 2005). It provides an activity that all people can engage with at different degrees and as stated is an ideal 'entry' activity to gauge who is interested in and suitable for employment for example. "So at the beginning establishing the farm as a therapeutic venue where we can get to know people on a one to one basis but then also developing work experiences, and I suppose likes and relationships with businesses and organisations that we can place them into once they are ready for it and also if they learn a particular skill they then want to get into." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). Another stakeholder from the same project states how this approach is ideal, "the building without the farm means that you are taking too many risks with people, whereas the farm house vet people, find out about people, see who is suitable for a stronger work experience thing so it works well, start

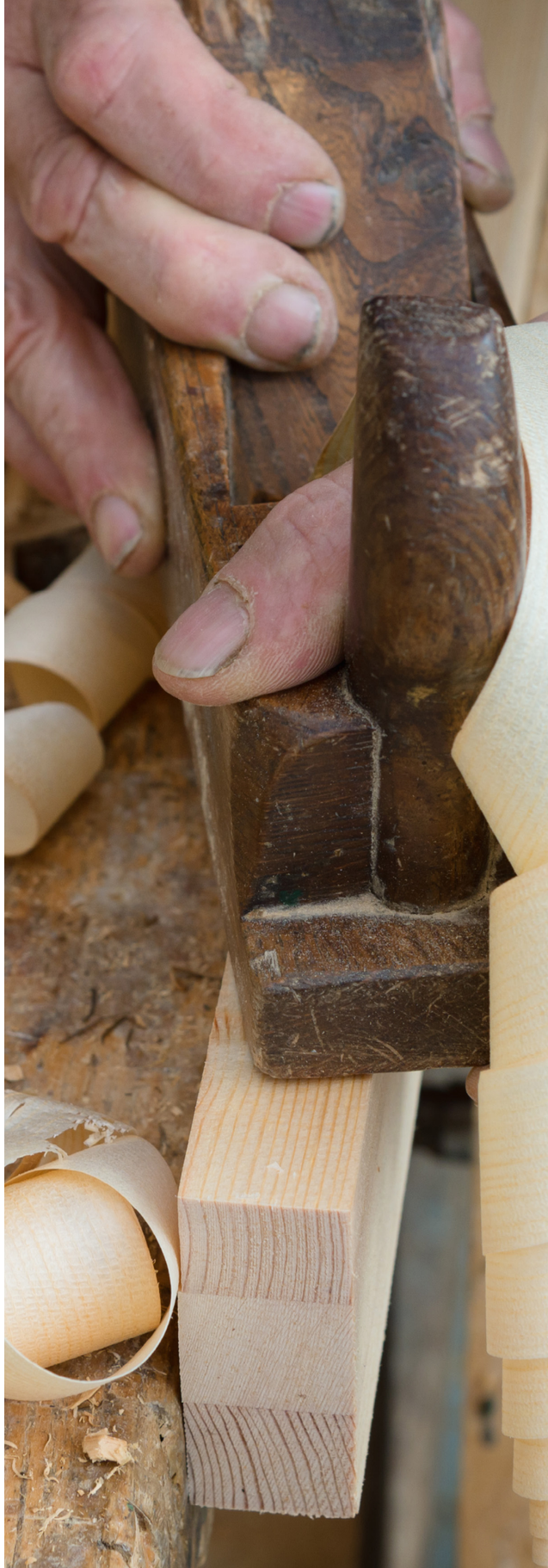
people at the farm and they transition to the building." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). Project 4, whilst also recognising the therapeutic benefits associated with food growing, place importance on the enterprise aspect of their project, as shown in the following quote.

"Well it's enterprise I think… as in making a wooden stool to sell, but people aren't very keen on planting lettuces or cabbages, but they quite like seeing ten quid come in when we sell them… that quickly engages people and the fact that enterprise can be as simple as planting a seed then harvesting it, nature grows it… so it's a very simple form of enterprise which people can understand and people can engage with that… some people who work at the project believe that working the land and getting your hands in the soil is very therapeutic and to a certain extent I agree with that, but that's fine and I think you could do that anyway, you could do that in a window box if you want in a high rise skyscraper, but what you can't do there is create this enterprise and I think enterprise is important because at the smallest level a seed that costs nothing… half a pence or whatever, or .0001 of a pence is planted in the ground and it grows, it flourishes and it's cropped and is sold on, at say 10 pence, that is enterprise and that is… people see the whole thing going around from nurturing to harvesting to selling, I know I'm repeating myself a bit, but it is this cycle that they see and I think it's often quite eye-opening and there is a belief from that, that you can do stuff yourself … not only does it build confidence, but it builds belief in yourself that things can happen, you can, people will, are willing to buy something that you have made or something that you've grown and that's quite a big statement, very small scale, very simplistic, but it is quite a big statement and I think that overrides the fact that, the good that comes from working with wood or putting your hands in the soil, which is undoubtedly there, but that's not the biggest part, the biggest part really is the enterprise, for me I see it as that… very clearly." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4).

This section has shown that there are numerous benefits of the positive person centred approach focused on change and empowerment. Furthermore, using the land has undoubtedly particular benefits associated with it. However, this needs to be further evidenced along with the range of outcomes associated with projects via data collected from individuals supported by projects. The following section discusses the importance of employment and skills more generally and how projects can aid in promoting these.

Employment and skills

A key theme throughout the interviews was the role of skills and employment in helping to support people. For people who are incarcerated, accrediting the prison horticultural programme activities was something driven by the participants; essentially whilst this doesn't change the nature of the project, it does provide a qualification, recognisable in the community (and also increases esteem, see Hunter and Boyce, 2009). "The whole accreditation thing, I always used to say don't worry about it, I haven't got any qualifications whatsoever but, in the real world sometimes it does help doesn't it." (Project worker, Prison). As shown by Brown et al., (2015) and by the following quote, such spaces provide opportunities for people to excel in a skill they have previously had, or to learn a new one, "what I have seen is that prior to their issues with substance they were individuals doing what they did and that can be anything from being a Social Worker or a Psychiatrist or a builder or being unemployed but they had skills before and it's about dealing with their substance so that they can go back to what they did or start doing something new." (Stakeholder, Project 2). The following quote emphasises how learning new skills is only part of what spaces like Project 1 offer for people.



"what's unique about this space particularly is the setting of it and the fact that it provides people with an alternative environment where they can just either take time out or think about who they are or what they are or where they are and what they need to do to move forward and I think what the outdoor space here does, it provides that. It also then provides the opportunity to engage people in specific things, training for new skills, maybe things they haven't done before." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1).

Throughout the interviews it was recognised that mainstream employment may not appropriate for all, and thus, is not a fundamental aim. For Project 1, using the land is a good tool to provide experiences around working and structure and responsibility and producing something tangible aids with this. However, there is the recognition people need to be enabled to desist, and to take responsibility for their rehabilitation (Cosgrove and O'Neill., 2011; Ward and Maruna in Cosgrove and O'Neill., 2011). "The tool we're using is working the land...it could always be any kind of work, although I think that life lessons learnt with planting and growing are pretty stronger and the sort of encouragement of planting something growing and eating it, it does something to the individual. ... so for me it's the gospel but we want people to engage with work and increasingly we want that work to be commercial...I think we started off it was just about therapy but increasingly we feel like we want people to at least you know, to experience a product from beginning to sale, and even be involved in it at point of sale, which we are not there, but that is what we want it to be commercial , we want them to see that...it's challenging because there will be some people ready for that kind of pressure if you like, because commercially it's pressure, some people won't cope with being part of that, some people will really thrive on it and see the point of it...so we have got to get the right balance for the right people." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). Being engaged in something productive and meaningful is a key part of Project 4, who also report on the importance of taking on responsibility and 'learning by doing'. This essentially enables people to be part of something, and to be valued, which is a key part of their rehabilitative journey.

"The project allows an individual to start to believe that he can actually achieve something, so … we start them off with a very basic level of say wood working or perhaps being involved in the garden, or doing basic cooking and as they grow in confidence we start to allow them to take on their own little projects, so for someone who perhaps who has built a simple wooden stool, perhaps goes on to start creating a shed and then perhaps starts to be given a larger project of clearing a whole area of ground and perhaps constructing something on that area, so it's about them starting to take some responsibility, not just for themselves but around others, so by cooking [for example] people move out of themselves a little bit and start to provide a meal for others so they are actually taking responsibility for other people and also that they can feel the enjoyment and satisfaction from that as well, so that's how we do it… I believe very strongly that we should allow people to discover that they can do things and then allow them to take it on further… so we don't educate as such, I think we allow people to learn by example and also, we support their learning but we don't preach to them about how things should be done or how life should be we try to allow them to explore that and discover for themselves…". (Stakeholder 1, Project 4).

Being in a family – like, communal environment assists with being able to create a safe culture of taking responsibility across the projects, promoting confidence and social skills.

"The sort of therapy of working I think is something that a lot of the client group don't understand and don't believe in until they experience it. So they believe, lots of people believe, that being on benefits is better and being free not to work is better, and then they taste work and they quite like it, so I think that giving people that work experience is part of it and I think having a day, having to work with other people, having to listen to instruction and carry it out and to have money altogether because, its king of being forced into that kind of family type atmosphere, I think is it much needed, so I think we're here because there is a section of society that don't manage to integrate with other human beings very easily and they don't manage for a variety of reasons to work, to support themselves." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1).

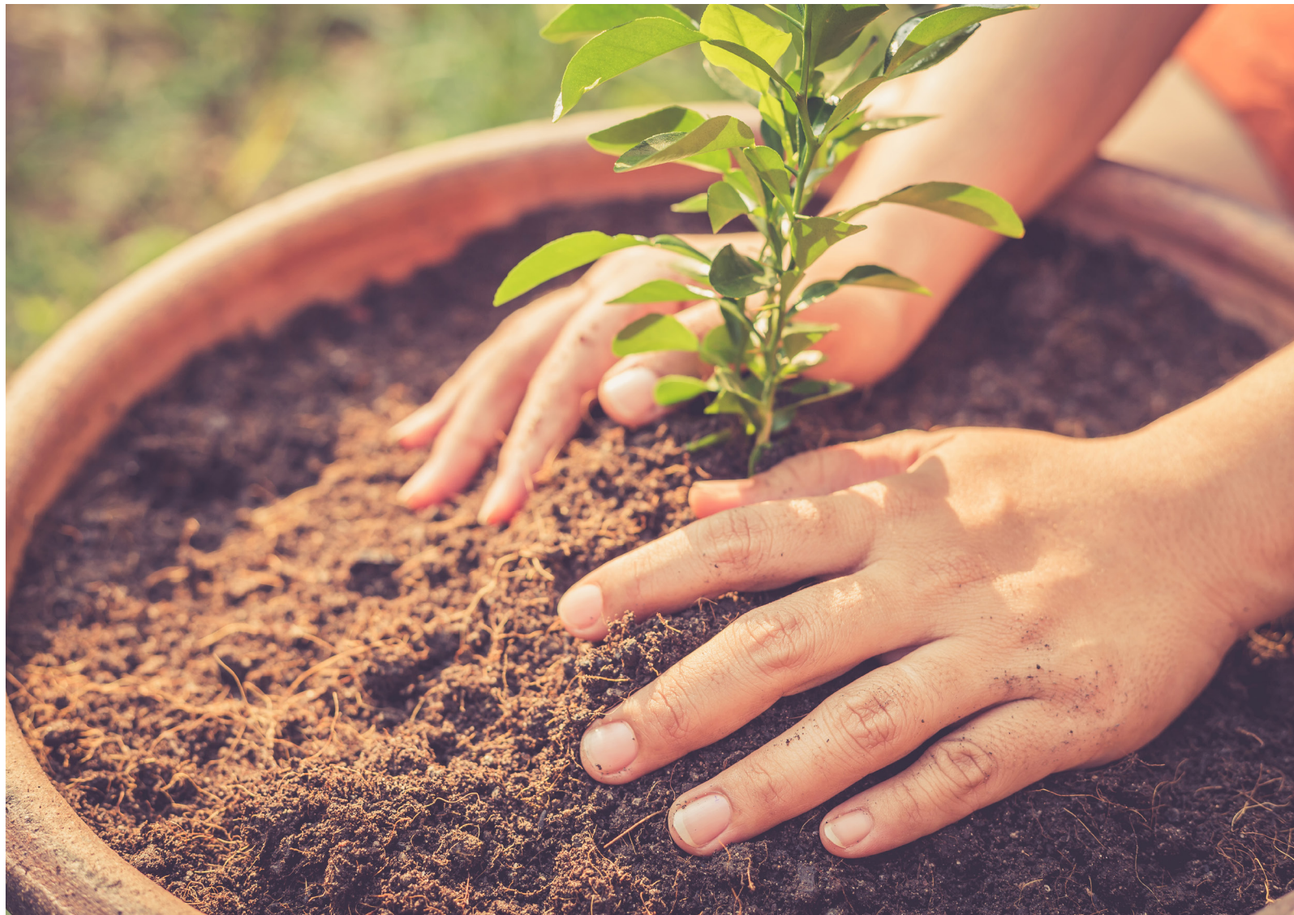
One stakeholder comments on the some of the changes in individual's behaviour from working, "when people [men on ROTL] go out to work, you see such a change they come back and they behave and talk as if they're normal equal human beings … you talk to each other with respect and I think treating each other as normal human beings, I think that's what they get from going out to work…" (Stakeholder 2, Project 4). The projects detailed in this report provide opportunities for people to be given a chance (Harley, 2014) and they recognise that the opportunities they provide could be life changing. As previously mentioned, some of the stakeholders thought about the importance of skills. Project 4 initially thought that education and skill sets as outcome measure would be important, "but actually they're not, I mean qualifications and skill sets…well of course they're not bollocks but they are to a certain extent if you've come from a, if you've got yourself down as, so far below the scale of what's acceptable to society to try and get yourself above that line again. Skills and qualifications they help but they're not, you've got to believe that you will be accepted that's the thing… and that's what [project 4] does… Of course bringing people up to speed on literacy skills is vital but we struggle to do that at the moment, we're getting better … the argument that that's the 'be-all and end-all' of everything that's not the case… of course it's wonderful if people can be taught to read, of course it's great if people can start to add up, but that is not the panacea, that is not the cure, that is not what the problem is, it's much bigger than that… the problem is their background and they believe they're shit basically, that's what it is and that's what you've got to break, you've got to restore some belief in themselves." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). Thus, in the case of these projects, education and skills is approached very broadly, in line with what is important to supporting individuals. Nevertheless, Project 4 also recognises employment as a successful outcome, along with reductions in re-offending, and accommodation, which they have been able to achieve due to their approach. "I think the employment is very high indicator of a good outcome … we have an astonishingly high statistic of 90% in employment for day release prisoners who have been through the project, which I am sure we will maintain actually, somewhere around there, which is incredible and that is because of the identification of building long-term individual relationships really and supporting them." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4).

Providing activities where people can learn new skills, Project 1 is also seen as a key way in helping to empower people and is likely to contribute towards being able to obtain employment (or to engage in purposeful activity), "to be honest I think we need to give these people the chance, so either in building or farming or...we probably need to be that first step where we can give people a reference… .I'm just conscious with people with the big records, and trouble and prison, are going to find it really difficult to get jobs so I'd like to see that developed." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). As highlighted in the initial section of the report, offending diminishes when offenders gain employment, and over 75% of offenders wish to seek work when returning to the community (Edgar et al., 2012; Prison Educations Trust, 2011). However, there is recognition that there is an important role for employers to play, to create opportunities for people on their recovery journey to seek employment, or people following incarceration for example. These opportunities may be jobs, or may be helping with entrepreneurial skills, which is part of the holistic support package. "…we need to make sure that they've got the support mechanism, that's why we've linked with the university so that we've got business mentors, we've got volunteers already to deal with their substance misuse and accommodation issues, but that we've equally got to have the local support to help them with the business side." (Commissioner, Project 2). Whilst this is the focus of the following section, there is a lot of potential for partnership working to fulfil some of these aspirations around employment opportunities but also other provision such as affordable housing. "I would like to be able to, as a charity, to be able to offer people practical support to find employment and provide some of that employment, so to have some business or connected to come business that are sort of partnering with us or even we are the business or the company that we can employ people that maybe employers won't employ....we would also love to through the relationships we have built with individuals to be able to support safe, positive housing, that's something that we look at quite a bit, so a long term dream of mine is that we build houses and that people that help build them get to live in them." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). The aspect of housing and wrap around services is discussed by Conahan (2012) who found better outcomes for those on a substance abuse treatment programme when housing was provided. What has been stated so far in the report is in line with the following quote from a commissioner highlighting how projects require a long term vision and support from committed people in the community.

"What we're finding is that there's a lot of community support, in other words what we're trying to nurture is that offenders who have come out of prison who have got a keen interest in setting up a business, we want to put them in alongside likeminded individuals … but we want to put people who want to set up their own businesses with similar people who have got businesses who can work together and then sort out their own … so they're working … helping one another and it might be that there's a person setting up his own … in one case just getting a white van and moving stuff … but that person can help set up and support somebody else and what we want to try and do is to say well once you get into your own business can you employ somebody else? Maybe an ex-offender? This is not a one year fix. This is a ten year plan where you've got a … developing the persons skills, setting the scene in the prison setting, giving them the skills etc., but nurturing it, developing it and when they're coming out giving them support and there could be business matters, not just from the university, but we see ex-business people who want to volunteer one day a month to sort of support clients to set up their own businesses, they've done it before. They want to put something back themselves into society." (Commissioner, Project 2).

For Project 3, the following quote shows how these spaces may not lead to employment for some people, but how they also provide a safe haven to prevent people from risky situations, which is true for the other case study projects too.

"Well these are elderly as well as people who have got, well the guy washing up for instance, has never worked, was never ever going to work … And for some people, this is their anchor point for the rest



of their lives… for some of the people who are more able adults, in a funny sort of way they are more vulnerable because they want to go out, they want to feel normal, they are the ones who are likely to end up in town, they are the ones who will get drawn into crime and end up holding the telly when the copper comes round the corner sort of thing. We do keep quite a lot of them out of trouble from trampling the streets and so on, whereas [name] washing up, they are going to have to be looked at wherever they are so in a way they are less vulnerable to some of society's problems than more able ones." (Stakeholder, Project 3).

The report has so far outlined project's activities and ethos, and has looked at some of the outcomes associated with involvement in the project. However, threaded through the interviews were also a number of challenges. The following section provides insight to some of the common challenges faced across projects.

4d. Challenges

A challenge faced by Projects 1 and 2 in particular was knowing when to stop supporting someone, as the goal is to help them to be independent. This is not necessarily a goal of Project 3, due to the therapeutic space of the project not necessarily geared to providing transitional support or people desisting from an issue. This project however faced other similar challenges in terms of sustainability, which will be discussed accordingly. Project 4 found support was required beyond its original remit, as trainees moved into the community. Its response, encountering lacunae, had been to extend its role, providing ongoing mentoring and help with accommodation. Financial sustainability has also become an issue, despite successful fund-raising activities, with the requirement for individual support not easily reconciled with income generation.

Retaining volunteers / members

A stakeholder from Project 1 gives one example of when it was sensible for someone engaging with the project to become a volunteer, "there is a lady who helps in the kitchen who has come through. [so by come through, do you mean like independent now?] more independent yes, willing to take on a particular role and not just coming up and saying well what do you want me to do today. Taking some responsibility which is good so I see some level of progression, taking ownership or something." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). This shows that it is probably decided on a one to one basis, and is hard to have a set criteria for approaching this, and relies on people understanding and sharing the ethos of the project. Due to their focus on transitioning (as opposed to a long term therapeutic approach), stakeholders from Projects 1 and 2 spoke about the appropriateness of retaining the people they support, in the form of volunteers, and the need to know when to encourage someone to leave / move beyond the project "we spoke about it earlier about volunteers coming back through but deciding when it is right for someone to stay here and when do you have to encourage someone to move on?" (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). Another stakeholder from the project states how their ultimate outlook is to help people whilst they attend the project and to leave the project too, "it's OK giving people respect and love but you need to see them developing and flying the nest from here because you want people to leave us." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). Project 4 had adopted a 'family' approach to trainees leaving the project, with many seeking to retain contact and indeed bring their own families back to the site on visits Whilst there is an indication of the need for peer and social support, this aspect deserves further research.

Monitoring and evaluation

Robust monitoring and evaluation is highlighted throughout the literature as being needed. Data collection and evaluation was a challenge arising from the interviews; this was deemed important by stakeholders despite recognising the challenges associated with it. The challenges of capturing data were due to a number of reasons highlighted throughout the interviews. As people are on a recovery journey, or in a stage of transition, it is not the aim of the projects or initiatives to retain people – thus capturing information when they have moved on is inherently problematic. The following quotes show how it may be challenging to track the people they support, or to track the changes in people; as outlined in the initial section, it is recognised that people are on a journey and a relapse is not a failure for example. "People get involved, become volunteers and stay for a very very long time; for others there's no rhyme or reason, why they leave, people can just come and use it for a short time and disappear and each person's recovery is a victory. The downside to us is the not knowing why because we can't record the good stuff, we hear afterwards that Joe Blogs has got a job and he is working at the Post Office and that's the reason he doesn't come any more. We would like to know that, at the point of leaving because that's a good outcome for us, but generally people just disappear, and that's kind of how it works." (Stakeholder, Project 2). It is also challenging to separate external factors which have a large impact on people's lives. For example, Project 1 previously collected data but soon found that what they were required to measure had little reflection on engagement with the project, rather on external, larger factors, "we were measuring softer outcomes, we were measuring attendance, measuring you know drug use, self-esteem, and all those kinds of things and it just became apparent that to be successful in that way it wasn't really dependent entirely on what we were doing with them but it was dependent on all manner of things. So it was dependent on their housing situation, dependent on what the doctor has said to them during the week, dependent on what their relationships were like with their family, with their son, with their daughter, everything like that and all those things were out of our control." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1).

Therefore, as the following stakeholder states, engaging with people on a journey of change is not as straightforward as measuring a beginning and an end. "if you're building a wall you can look at it measurably and say oh yes I have done so much today...whereas if you are working with someone you can sometimes have good days and then they can come back the next week and they are a different person, and you can think well what was that last week all about and it feels like a waste of time, which it isn't, but it is just a measure of the work." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). This ethos ultimately views people beyond the labels placed on them by society, and provides support, which isn't set to a timescale. It recognises how different people need different things, and how people are at different points in their journey. The criteria for engaging is (apart from the criteria set out in the previous section) primarily based on service users / members being motivated or ready to engage or change. "If they are too early on in that journey then it's not appropriate, it's not right and we say come back when they are more stable or when it's manageable when they have got it under management basically themselves. Because we are not here to help manage them." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). Therefore, projects may not necessarily be appropriate for people who are not ready for change. The relationships that are central to these projects are also key to long term monitoring and evaluation in terms of providing opportunities to hear from people.

"There's one that has been through the programme that has been released and he got back in touch on his own accord, had a phone call out the blue and he was asking for help looking for voluntary work within the community, which we managed to signpost him and set him up with a community organisation. It's always difficult to track and monitor how they are getting on obviously we have lost contact with him again now, but I mean he got in touch a second time after we had lost touch with him, so he could get in touch again, who knows." (Project worker, Prison).

The skills and time needed to develop monitoring and evaluation procedures as well as trying to apply for funding on top of the project work was a constraint highlighted in the interviews, with stakeholders recognising their own strengths and weaknesses, "the ability to position ourselves in the market as a viable project that can access funding, I am useless with that, but the fact remains that it's not in any of our skill set, that's the challenge for us and so I have been of the opinion for a long while that when we get the charity up to speed we will need to stay below ground for a while and build enough income to be able to employ somebody for a 12 month contract that would be, that can pull it together and help us be more strategic, help us record results better, all of that sort of stuff, all of which we are just not good at, that's the reality." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). Devising tools to capture data requires a particular skill set, time and resource to be able to do this. It is likely that few projects may have the resource or expertise for this and it also deters away from key activities which project staff need to deliver, impacting service users (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011; Clinks, 2015a). Demonstrating impact or the success of these interventions is not necessarily therefore in the skill set of project workers, but is increasingly recognised as important, to meet the requirements from funders and commissioners. "I think one of the things that [Project 2] has always had some difficulty with is promoting what we do and evidencing what we do, we all know it works, everyone knows it works but to people outside of what we do, they like to have facts and figures rightly so and it's a little difficult for us to evidence what we do." (Stakeholder, Project 2). One stakeholder foresees the role of evidence as becoming even more important in the future. "Well I think there's an appreciation growing in [this county] because we've been very keen to make sure that our third sector … our voluntary organisations recognise the fact that we now need to be able to provide evidence to our funders what we're doing, why we're spending public money, is it actually getting the benefits, so a lot of it now is being very much focused on evidence based approaches and I think there will be a growth in the work that universities will be doing in the future." (Commissioner, Project 2). Thus, it is important for projects to be able to demonstrate their social value. Project 4 has gone a long way down this path. It engaged early with a local university, with Masters Students helping formulate a strategy for evaluation in the pilot phase. This was formalised with the award of Big Lottery Funding, where a small amount was ring-fenced for a three year evaluation, with outcome measures agreed with the funders from the outset. Interestingly, as a learning organisation, the project is becoming more confident in its own ability to monitor progress and measure success and these outcomes are being renegotiated, just as its activity base is being redesigned. The emphasis now is on ways of measuring changes in human, social and cultural capital as a consequence of engaging with the project. This is not to say that the small numbers involved, tracking individuals as they move into the community and a host of definitional issues around, for example, offending behaviour do not continue to pose problems for the project, the evaluators and funders.

Political and funding environment

Building on the previous section alongside the importance of demonstrating impact for funding requirements, many of the projects spoke about the difficulties associated with being reliant on short term funding, making it hard to plan in the long term (also see Conahan, 2012). "You can't plan for really more than a year. We have been fortunate in that we have had a steady contract with the County Council for 50 adults per week, 10 per day but again every year you are being reviewed and you don't know if the contract is going to be renewed. We haven't got a 10 year contract or 5 year contract, I think the biggest we had was 18 months and with the cuts you never knew quite whether they were going to renew the contract or not." (Stakeholder, Project 3). This situation not only makes it difficult for future planning but the uncertainties associated with the austerity context also raise anxieties about the future of projects, "everybody has gone onto personal budgets now and we haven't lost anybody … so at the moment we are doing okay but again you never know whether the cuts are going to mean personal budgets are going to be slashed and they won't be able to come at all." (Stakeholder, Project 3). In light of the uncertainties around funding for some of these projects, there was a general consensus throughout the interviews that project activities (e.g. food growing) alone were not considered as a viable income generation option for the running of projects. For example, one project generated around £3,000 from produce over one year (without taking into account costs). Another stakeholder reflects on their farming activities. "The eggs work well, that's not bad, I think we are probably able to make about £3,000 so when you think of that as a charitable income that's not bad that a good bit of income, when you are looking at salaries it's a drop in the ocean but it's a good one, there is scope but all of them require someone for that to be their focus do you know what I mean, the big thing that we have learnt over the last year or so is we have tried to focus on too many things, and therefore achieving none of them well, you know but to make this produce really start making money (a) it's questionable whether it is even possible and (b) it requires all that you are doing." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). Projects have therefore learned that food growing alone is an unsustainable activity in terms of generating an income. The prison project worker, drawing on their experience in the community, also reflects on this aspect.

"It's a difficult one and I will be quite honest, I still don't know the answer. I mean going back to [community gardening project], if you're a social enterprise that is trying to encourage local residents into the gardens to grow and use it for whatever they want to, but your also trying to produce and make as much money as possible through selling locally grown produce, whatever people say, growing is a skilled job and you have to be dedicated to doing that. Even with the best intentions in the world, volunteers can really be a real hindrance to doing that and they can seriously take a lot of time away from those that at skilled at doing it. Then all of a sudden you have a big risk then, because when volunteers arrive and you are thinking oh no, I haven't got time. It's either one or the other. You do get the odd volunteer who are really good, don't get me wrong but others if they have got any kind of learning difficulties, they need a lot more time, or a lot of them you know, just used to come in and just want to talk and I always used to make the time to talk to them." (Project worker, Prison).

In light of this, Project 1 are implementing a unique model (necessary to be non-dependent, particularly in the current climate – see Cosgrove and O'Neill., 2011) to overcome challenges associated with funding, but also in providing employment opportunities, as the project wants to offer places without having to charge. This model essentially is

a charity and a company, the company which generates incomes from undertaking building and construction work, and the money generated will fund the charity, "the aim is in time, the charity itself will have funding to be able to pay the company for the people, so the charity is doing all the people stuff, the company is doing the farming." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). Linking with the business element (through building/construction) enables sufficient income to be made and also provide employment opportunities, "we can make more money out of building than we can farming, and it's equally good work experience, probably better because it's more commercial" (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). Having business or church support for the Project 1 was a vision of one of the stakeholders. "I would love it to be that we don't charge anybody to come up here. So I'd love to be able to go to agencies and say you can send your people up, there's no cost and we're available for all people. I'd love that, I'd love the money not to be an issue. So I'd like a business or churches to get behind it." (Stakeholder 2, Project 1). This model allows them to remain independent and to have the freedom to implement their vision. However, they are cautious that they want to remain true to their vision and not to let the income generation activities compromise their charitable activities. "We want to be sustainable and also we want to teach people a good work ethic and we want our standards to be high so we want what we so produce to be of value but we want the activity to be meaningful. But we have just got to check ourselves every now and again because we don't want that to be the end goal, the be all and end all". (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). Project 4, as noted above, has also recognised this tension between income generation and the core focus of the project, that is providing a supportive route (for prisoners and men on licence) back into the community and employment. This had resulted in a change to its business model. Originally the Project Manager had hoped that it might achieve a 60:40 split between external funds and internal income generation but now acknowledged that an 80:20 split was more realistic. As noted above, that is not to say that the role of enterprise and employability was not deemed central (and more opportunities were being explored to generate revenue) but that the distinction between therapeutic work and commercial work was evident. In this particular instance the tension was compounded by funding regulations governing the nature of the work that can be done by offenders on licence.

The tension between balancing economic and social (values) objectives is highlighted in the literature (Cosgrove and O'Neill., 2011). Despite the challenges raised in this section so far around the changing political and funding environment, one commissioner reflects on the significant role of the VCS, the opportunities associated with opening the third sector, as well as noting some potential challenges.

"Well certainly what it's doing is it's giving new ways of thinking and news ways of working. That's for sure, and that's to be welcomed. I think it's a bit too early to say whether or not it's going to work …… but I think everyone will move in that direction and that it will work but I mean there's a lot of very experienced third sector organisations working in the field and have been for many, many years and I think what we're now seeing is we're actually seeing that work recognised nationally, that there's an appreciation of the … if you like the third sector, the voluntary sector and the part that they can play. I think up until very recently, the last few years, it's been predominantly focused on treatment , if I can call it the professionals rather than the work that is done by the third … and they're equally as professional in their approach and in how they tackle things … tackle their clients, so I think there's an opportunity now to nurture that. I don't think we'll know that for four or five years, being realistic. … [But you've recognised a change?] Oh yeah. A change in approach. I think it's recognised that the current system hasn't worked … and I think the Government is now determined to crack that and I think they're looking at ways to do that." (Commissioner, Project 2).

This also reflects the need for monitoring and evaluation over a long term period to assess the role of the VCS and the effect of their provision of services. However, in terms of public sector funding, much of this depends on local commissioners; for example, in one county the local commissioners have invested into such social models. However, other local authorities may not. Thus it is very context and key person dependent. "From what I gather a lot of it does come down to the commissioner and their stance on how to deal with the issues for example, I can't remember which commissioner I spoke to know about it who was public health, about a Master Gardener Programme and they basically said it's not my problem, you need to go and see someone else about that." (Project worker, Prison). Having a self-sufficient model or having to rely on external funding streams is necessary, as food growing is deemed not a viable activity to keep a project running in terms of paying overhead and staff costs. Thus, in terms of food growing and generating income from produce, there is consensus that this is not a viable means of income generation, but rather an additional activity or a tool used to promote person centred support.

Local partnership working

For many of the projects, relationships with key people are crucial, who understand what they do or are trying to do, which is often established over a period of time. Referrals from agencies, and working with them to support the person is seen to be key, and there is a desire from projects to work more closely with agencies, regardless of financial constraints, "the Offender Managers and Probation Service and some of the recovery services that are in [location] that I was working with, they still want to work with us but because we lost that council contract we don't get any funding for that partnership now. And so we have just got to be really careful. I think there are a lot of agencies that would support the work we do and refer people to us, but they don't have the money to pay for a place or to pay for referrals and at this point in time we don't have the money to offer some sort of bursary scheme or anything like that where we can say it doesn't matter about the money just send us the individual." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). The same stakeholder reflects on how it doesn't appear easy for agencies to partner with their project. "There was an Offender Manager who was desperate to get a group of six guys up to the farm as she thought it would be really beneficial but she herself wasn't 100% clued into what was happening with the funding...I think a lot of people don't really have the control to be able to say yeah we want to use this, I will find the money to make it happen. There seem to be so many channels you have to go through." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). Outlined in the literature is how there is often a lack of awareness regarding social enterprises in prison and probation institutions and services, and may experience difficulties engaging with these organisations due to their limited finances and scope (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011).

The data indicates how relationships with key people take a long time to establish; some of the interviewees reflect on how current changes have negatively affected how agencies and projects engage.

"[Have the changes in probation impacted you in any way?] Yes, purely down to staff really because you have key members of staff who know what we do and how we do it and make referrals, and new staff come in and all that changes, we will have inappropriate referrals. So someone will refer someone to us who has just committed a racially aggravated offence and they are in the BNP and we have a lot of people here who are non-white who are from different countries, they could present a risk to us, also sex offenders who have licence conditions stating they can't have contact with under 18's, we have children here, so it's inappropriate. We can't keep up with the changes in Probation and new staff….It will stabilise and once it does, then maybe what we need to think about doing is having some kind of meaningful conversations to tell them exactly who they can refer and who they can't." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

For Project 4, changes at ministerial level were felt to have affected the project's operational context. This was most evident in the closure of many Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) schemes nationally and the constraints this placed on the project's relationship with the local prison, which was felt to have become more risk adverse in its approach. This poses a particular challenge for the maintenance of numbers. To even be considered for ROTL and hence admission to the project, for example, offenders have to be on the resettlement wing of the local prison (determined by security issues, disciplinary records and attitudinal and risk assessments), have made adequate progress with their sentence plan, be approved for ROTL by probation, police and the victim, pass a risk assessment board and be at an appropriate time in their sentence relative to release date. As one respondent

noted: "I'm aware that [Project Manager] doesn't want the numbers to drop too much it's us trying to get suitable people and once we identify them it's getting such a slow process to get them out." (Stakeholder, Project 4). Changes to the offender management system had also seen the Probation Trust (the second source of its trainees) disbanded and replaced by a local Community Rehabilitation Company (acting alongside the National Probation Service). However, relationships with the local Turnaround team, an integrated offender team, comprising police, probation, drugs treatment agencies and the community voluntary sector, which targets prolific offenders had remained supportive and visits to the project were considered an important link in the transition between prison and the community and the shaping of more positive attitudes to authority.

In the case studies there are examples of some positive partnerships with local organisations. For example, Project 2 has links with the medical treatment provider in the county. "We have an instant default referral programme from S2S who is our treatment provider. So anyone who accesses their service, there is an automatic referral to us. We don't always know at that point whether someone is an offender or not, and we may never know and it doesn't really make a difference unless someone poses a risk to us." (Stakeholder, Project 2). Project 2 are also, "currently hosting a relapse prevention group from Aquarius." (Stakeholder, Project 2). Local organisations and agencies working together is very much the desire of one commissioner, "it's really a case of making sure that the agencies involved, are tuned in together so that we're providing the support mechanism to address that client's needs, so it's making sure that the treatment agencies address the substance misuse but that we've got the support mechanism around it so that when they finish their treatment, or during the process of treatment, that a number of agencies are there to support them." (Commissioner, Project 2). Forming partnerships with local organisations and making them aware of the project may not provide short term opportunities but may pay off in the long run as shown by the following quote. "When we started up we have been round schools, we have been to local authority, we have talked to all sorts of people and they all said, what a lovely idea, oh no there's no money. But actually every single one of those people we talked to after we got a bit of a proven track record they came back to us." (Stakeholder, Project 3).

There is a degree of frustration in areas where local partnership working is not currently happening as demonstrated by the following quotes. "If there is a clever way of getting organisations to work together and share information together and support clients collaboratively then great but how you do that I don't know! (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). The fundamental ethos of the project raises questions around statutory support and suggests that there is potential for better partnership working and more support from statutory agencies in their experience. "We have people here today, they have been with us for a long time but other agencies have got to understand that's who we are and we do what we do because that's what we believe and as long as they are comfortable with it then great. It's down to individuals to decide. So I think probably our frustrations have been in that statutory agencies are often highly regulated. I don't know, maybe I question whether they are person centred...have they actually got the person's best interests at heart? If they do want to go somewhere or do something are they free to?" (Stakeholder 3, Project 1).

This raises questions around the potential for shared working on a larger scale to address some of the challenges raised so far and in light of the positive examples in one country. "We try to keep tabs on what's going on nationally and the manager of [Project 2], is very very aware of different projects that are taking place. We're aware of the project at I think it in Liverpool, The Brink. We're also aware of the project that's in Nottingham. Really good projects that we've been keen to look at to see whether we could develop them for ourselves and obviously if something's working somewhere else why not just replicate it. If it's working it's proven but what we're finding I think is that you've got local differences, nuances, particularly for your own catchment areas but there are some good projects going on, alcohol free cafes, alcohol free bars, etc., you know, there's a lot of activity going on that we're keen to look at and see what we can do locally." (Commissioner, Project 2). However, in the example of secure settings, the institution and the offenders need to be willing – illustrating the need for partnership working on a range of levels as outlined in Brown et al.'s (2015) evaluation. "The problem is at the moment with the prison service is that unless, most of the education is geared towards English, maths and industry so building, painting and decorating, industrial cleaning and train tracks and that's it and they are not looking, I spent a long time trying to persuade them that actually if you can build a fence on a farm you can build a fence in someone's back garden, you have got lots of transferrable skills. If you can grow on a farm you can grow something in your back garden to feed your family … It does sound as if they have got a different hold on the inmates really. … we had a fantastic [prison] farm and yet it is just the staff keeping it ticking over and there is hardly any inmates involved … the easiest, the route of least resistance they will take … Very completely different mind sets." (Stakeholder, Project 3). Therefore, positive partnership working from the client level to local institutions and agencies, and local commissioners provides opportunities for projects.

4e. Looking forward

All of the case studies within this report have been on their own journey; it should be recognised that sufficient time has been required for projects to evolve and strengthen. In terms of moving forward, interviews reflected on staying focused in terms of the aims and ethos of the project, "we like to feel that we can be clear about who we are, what our values are and the reasons behind why we do what we do and give people a choice to say whether they want to come here or not." (Stakeholder 3, Project 1). Having good procedures in place allows for projects to run efficiently, for them to be transparent and for efforts to be put into new ventures for example.

"I think we are on much more solid ground now in terms of governance, our reporting, our systems, processes, pathways, we are much tighter now which is healthier for us but we have still maintained that what we do with members is key to it all, so the back room stuff hasn't really affected what we do with members, so I think going forward into this new world of commissioning and procurement I think we are in a much better place, I will be really pleased when we can prove to everyone that what we do works, because we all know it works, so that will be key for us. And it's about having that longevity really going forward you know, it would be nice to have chunks of time that we are contracted too that would be a little bit of a release for us so that we can start to look at other ventures and invest money into other ventures rather than thinking we might all be having to buy the Guardian next April." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

For Project 1, becoming self-sufficient and being able to provide support for free is what they ultimately want to achieve. "interestingly the provision for this client group is dwindling, less and less, so you know, if we manage to be self-sufficient, deliver this would then I think it will be invaluable," (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). However, as the following quote shows they do not want this to compromise their vision. "so I would say that's a goal to be self-sufficient, that's obviously, that is a goal that isn't the end in itself, the end that we are supporting people and we are seeing them recover and to do that we need to be able to survive ourselves, so within that in order to survive but I think the goal remains to connect with people either out of prison or people that we have met through our outreach work and provide them with an environment they can consider and manage change." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). For other projects, maintaining funding is part of their future vision or objectives. "…other aims break down into objectives around funding, where we look to fund the whole project for suppose, forever, if possible, to work towards self-financing and to continue to identify new income streams and new innovative ways of funding." (Stakeholder 1, Project 4). All of the projects spoke about having links with the wider community (which is integrated into Project 4's model) and some projects were aware of not wanting to become a 'ghetto'. This links to some of the literature pointing towards how projects can promote and facilitate social interaction, and break down barriers and stigma, within the community (Lysaght et al., 2012).

"we think that in some ways we have a silo of substance misuse people, you could call it a ghetto and what we need to do is to think about what we are going to do in the future, how do we normalise what we do and how do we bring other elements of normality into here. And we do bits of that, we have an allotment and a spinoff of from that, I think it's with a local parish council, we are doing some work on a cemetery so we send people out to work on that and we actually won an award, a bronze award for a community venture, we also run a football a community programme with Northampton Town, so then we have people that go out and play football with a whole bunch of others, for example people with disabilities,. So we are starting to do that but I think we need to do more of that because when people come here they build up social networks and they are right but we need to expand that with people from different backgrounds to get the whole normal picture.… We think the gym could be a start point for that, so we could allow people in to use our gym who have not used substances, we have a group of older people who come here every now and again, "blue rinse day", there are about 15 older people probably aged 60 plus from a local community group and they come here and spend the day here, they have lunch have a bit of a work out in the gym, but those people I don't know but I guess that some of them have had substance misuse problem but the majority wouldn't but they have lots of skills and lots of stuff that would be valuable to us and we need to do more of that, we need to integrate that into what we do." (Stakeholder, Project 2).

Project 4 has also recently achieved independent charitable status, one of its initial aims. As a young project it continues to evolve and places considerable emphasis on reflexivity, responding to individual needs and to opportunities for diversification and consolidation. It wants to act as a model of good practice in resettlement, whilst raising awareness. The role of evaluation is seen as central to this process, encouraging explicit consideration all the resources the project brings to bear, including the many that otherwise are shielded under heads such as goodwill or value in kind. One immediately obvious challenge is the amount of time and strength of partnership working required to support ex-offenders.

What has been highlighted throughout the report is the role of key people in having a vision and a deep commitment for the projects to support people. Ultimately, anyone working on the projects needs to share the same vision and commitment. On the other hand obtaining extra support to help with activities such as administration is also problematic due to a lack of funding in some cases. The role of key people in terms of having a successful relationship with agencies has been highlighted, as well as relation to the running of the projects is crucial. Such people comprise a number of key attributes, as highlighted in a number of interviews, demonstrated by the following quote. "We need another [name] but there are not many of them about, he's exceptionally good, he is. There aren't many people like [name] with the skills that he has got, with the work ethic he has got, with the heart to work for as little as he gets." (Stakeholder 1, Project 1). To conclude this section of the report, the following quote from a commissioner sets out advice for projects providing support for offenders and ex-offenders.

[Advice for other organisations] "I think be committed. It's been proven, an ex-offender once they get settled in they are one of the best employees because they recognise the fact that if they don't sort of toe the line that they're going to lose their job and getting another job is going to be twice as difficult as it was and they work out to be extremely loyal and good employees and they're, we've got 85,000 men and women incarcerated as we speak today. That's a hell of a lot of people who could be utilised fully within the work place, if you look at the cost of that, £35,000 per person in a prison setting, we ought really to be utilising … tapping into … and some of those clients … some of those people have got fantastic skills, really good skills that we need in the communities and we don't want to lose sight of that. Alright they've done something wrong but they've paid their price for that. We don't want to lose the sight of them coming back and being a major contributor to the local community." (Commissioner, Project 2).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This pilot study has identified the need to further explore the role of community and land based models in supporting rehabilitation (including desistance, and resettlement). There are clear calls in the existing literature for further research to investigate the role of social enterprises in tackling social exclusion and creating spaces of empowerment (Muñoz, 2010). There are also calls to generate wider research demonstrating the impact of horticultural activities within community and secure settings (Hale et al., 2005; Chisholm and Goodyear, 2012; Sempik et al., 2014). Furthermore, it is recognised, in light of the changing nature of the current political climate highlighted in this report, that VCS organisations are increasingly under pressure to generate robust evidence, demonstrate their impact and value, whilst appreciating the barriers and challenges in doing so (Cosgove and O'Neill, 2011). Nevertheless, the increasing role of the VCS in the CJS is viewed as opportunistic for VCS organisation to be innovative and creative, and there is much potential for the underdeveloped sector of social firms in the UK (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011; Gilbert et al., 2013). However, a sound understanding of the individual contexts and nuances in which different organisations and institutions operate is needed. Key points also reflect the need for better partnership working and stronger links between statutory agencies and other organisations working with marginalised communities. An increased understanding of what VCS organisations / social enterprises have to offer to complement existing services would help with this (Cosgrove and O'Neill, 2011).

Whilst there are a number of differences across projects, there are strong commonalities. The case study projects have demonstrated their commitment in providing alternative spaces for people experiencing multiple and complex life control issues. There are a number of ways in which projects do this:

- View people beyond a singular issue
- Ethos of providing holistic, 'life' support / skills, based on relationships
- Recognise that people are on a journey
- Long(er) term support
- Utilise peer mentoring / social support networks in a range of ways
- Use a number of activities to engage with people
- Provide a social, community environment
- Recognise that people need to be ready for change.
- Scope to link with businesses (for employment opportunities)

The opportunities for further development and future research centre on:

- Understanding participants lived experiences, bearing in mind the role of gender, race and class in shaping experiences
- What is best for their members / clients in terms of when they are ready to discontinue engaging with the project
- Having long term security (financial)
- Tensions associated with evidencing and demonstrating impact / value
- Enhancing visibility
- Having better and stronger links and partnership working on a range of levels
- Wider links with the community
- Mapping journeys and sharing learning (with other initiatives)
- Having a sound understanding of VCS organisations working in this area
- To explore any impacts or implications associated with self-payment

As previously outlined, the case study projects have been used as examples of types of projects using the land and / or community based models to support people facing a range of issues. Projects are diverse in nature and focus on different things however they share a similar ethos or approach, and face similar challenges. The evolving nature of the models suggests there is further scope to refine and improve their services, something that can be achieved when time is taken to reflect and evaluate their services and model. Therefore, taking an action research approach to evaluating their services would be beneficial for projects, by drawing on the expertise of independent researchers, as often the resources (such as skill set and time) required for these activities are not currently available within current project structures. As suggested in the report, VCS organisations and social enterprises are in a unique position to support the most marginalised members of society, and through their innovative approach are best placed to do this, however documenting and recognising their full value is much needed for their future existence and to fully support those who are experiencing marginalisation.

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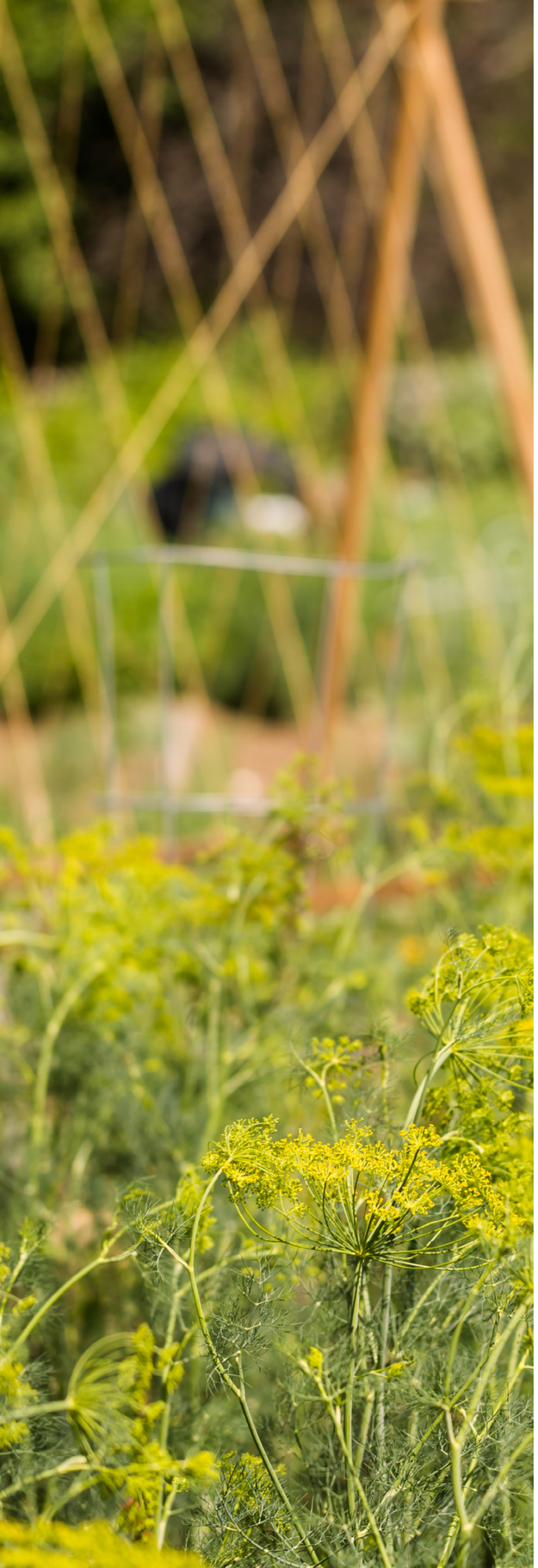

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Footnotes

[1] http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Prison%20the%20facts%20May%202015.pdf

[2] Surveying Prisoners Crime Reduction https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/surveying-prisoner-crime-reduction-spcr

[3] See Bragg et al., (2014).

[4] Stakeholders from project 4 were interviewed as part of as part of an evaluation (funded by the Big Lottery) and a Sociology of Health and Illness Mildred Blaxter Post-doctoral fellowship, Plymouth University.

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